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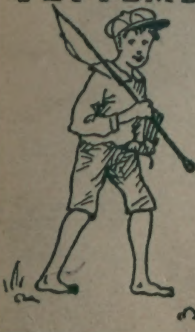


# HAPPYLAND'S FAIRY GROTTO PLAYS

BY EMILIE BLACKMORE STAPP  
AND ELEANOR CAMERON



SEPTEMBER



OCTOBER



FEBRUARY



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## HAPPYLAND'S FAIRY GROTTO PLAYS

*By Emilie Blackmore Stapp*

and

*Eleanor Cameron*

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PLEASANT to read, practical to act, are "Happyland's Fairy Grotto Plays," that in their serial publication were welcomed in over a million homes. The plays in this volume are especially designed for fall and winter. They make a treasure house for teachers and community workers.

Miss Stapp is a successful author of children's books, founder of the Happy Tribe, and a children's editor. Miss Cameron is a musician, composer, author, and teacher, in constant association with children. For several years the authors experimented in a little community theater for children, studying the needs, the capacities, the pleasures of small actors and audiences, and out of the experience has grown this group of plays.

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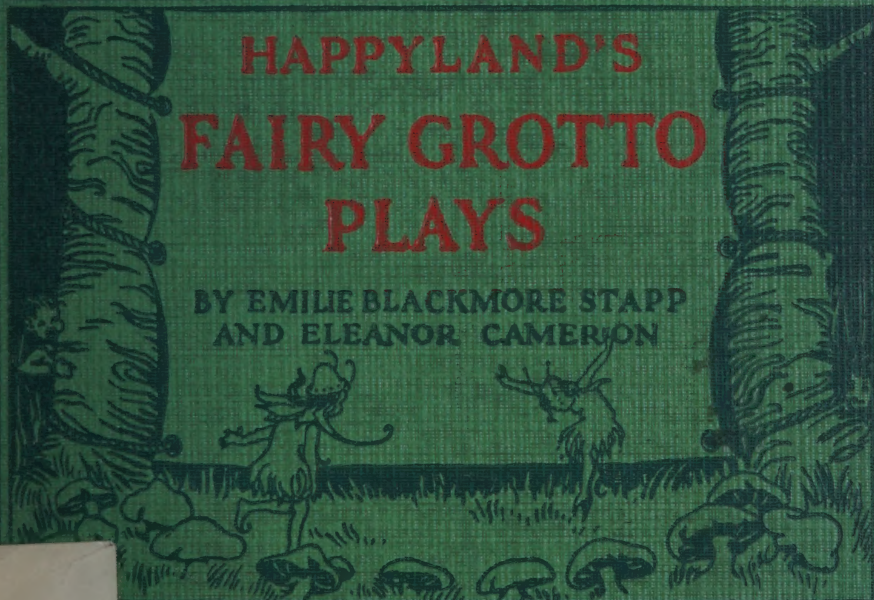


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BY EMILIE BLACKMORE STAPP  
AND ELEANOR CAMERON

BOSTON · NEW YORK  
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN CO.  
THE RIVERSIDE PRESS

SEPTEMBER



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**The Riverside Press**  
**CAMBRIDGE · MASSACHUSETTS**  
**PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.**

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**SEPTEMBER**  
**THE TADPOLE SCHOOL**





## CHARACTERS

PETER DOBBIN, boy of nine.

PROFESSOR BULLFROG, boy of eleven with rather deep voice.

QUEEN OF THE WATER-LILIES, slender girl of twelve or thirteen.

KING OF THE TADPOLES, sturdily built boy of twelve or thirteen who carries himself well.

JELF, the Happy Tribe Love Elf.

TADPOLES, six or eight boys of seven or eight.

WATER-LILY FAIRIES, girls of eight or nine.

## COSTUMES

PETER DOBBIN. Overalls.

PROFESSOR BULLFROG. Green cloth with brown spots. Cut the sleeves with long points to hang over hand.

QUEEN OF THE WATER-LILIES. White dress, yellow sash, green about the neck and gold crown.

KING OF THE TADPOLES. Suit of brownish-green.

WATER-LILY FAIRIES. White, yellow sashes, touch of green about neck. Should carry white lily wreaths.

TADPOLES. Brown suit.

JELF. Suit of gold and carrying wand of gold.

*Time.* Friday morning of the first week of school in September.

*Place.* Bank of Water-Lily Pool in Happyland.

## STORY OF THE PLAY

PETER DOBBIN, a lazy boy, runs away from school to go fishing in Water-Lily Pool in Happyland. He believes he is going to have a splendid time, and is much surprised when

the fish will not bite, but thinks it is because he is whistling. Professor Bullfrog explains the real reason to Peter. To Peter's astonishment he finds the Tadpoles, the fish, the water-lilies all have school in their own way, just as much as do little boys and girls. He meets Jelf, the Love Elf of the Happy Forest, who also helps him learn the lesson that sends him home a better boy.

### STAGE DIRECTIONS

**WATER-LILY POOL** is supposed to be at left stage. Build the stage, if possible, to have a little slope supposedly down toward the Pool. Cover it with green to give the appearance of grass. Fasten your foliage from wires above to represent overhanging branches. Long log in back center stage, where the Tadpoles may sit when in school. Have a stump here and there, and, if possible, use tree branches on which the leaves are turning in color.

## THE TADPOLE SCHOOL

SCENE. *As the curtain is slowly raised a boy is heard whistling cheerily. It is Peter Dobbin seated with his fishing-pole on the bank of Water-Lily Pool, and trying to have a beautiful time all by himself. By his side is his school lunch-box and his books, the latter strapped together. His straw hat is lying near. He is dressed in overalls and is barefooted, for the weather is still warm, and Peter is just a country boy who attends the village school.*

PETER (*earnestly*). Oh what a big, big dunce am I  
To think that I would even try  
To fish and whistle at one time!  
You'd think my brains not worth a dime.

(*Peter rubs his head wonderingly.*)

PROFESSOR BULLFROG.

(*Hops from behind a stump and goes close to Peter, whom he regards with much surprise. Cocks his head on one side and then another, gazing at the boy. Clears his throat loudly. Deep voice.*)

A real, live boy as sure as I'm a frog!  
Did you come sailing here in that big log?

(*Professor Bullfrog waves his arms out toward Water-Lily Pool.*)

I am surprised! You gave me quite a shock!  
For by MY turnip it is ten o'clock!

(*Professor Bullfrog pulls out a big turnip from his pocket as though it were a watch. It is fastened to his belt by a heavy cord strung through it.*)



(*Sternly.*) What DOES this mean? I say, what DOES this mean?

This hour of day no boys are ever seen

By Water-Lily Pool — I do declare

You've given me a DREADFUL — AWFUL scare —

A D-R-E-A-D-F-U-L scare!

(*Professor Bullfrog hops in a little circle about Peter, and pretends to be much disturbed by the unaccustomed sight of a truant boy fishing in Water-Lily Pool on a school morning.*)

PETER.

(*Looks in amazement at a Bullfrog that can speak. He rubs his eyes to be certain that he is not dreaming.*)

See here, old fellow, what's your name?

I'd like to ask you how you came.

PROFESSOR BULLFROG. Oh, I'm Professor Bullfrog,  
if you please,

My home is near that log — there by those trees.

(*Nods his head toward the log at back stage.*)

I teach my Tadpoles every single day.

They have no time to waste in foolish play!

PETER.

(*Laughs loudly, drops his fishing-pole to the ground and springs to his feet, still laughing incredulously.*)

A Bullfrog for a teacher — what a joke!

I wonder if you talk, or do you croak?

And where, sir, do you have your tadpole school —  
Out on this bank where it is always cool?

(*Peter looks about as though wondering if there could*

*really be a school on the bank of the Water-Lily Pool.)  
(Sound of a flute is heard as though coming from somewhere in the woods. It is played off stage.)*

PROFESSOR BULLFROG.

*(Cocks head on one side as though listening intently.)*

Do you hear Jelf? His flute's my tardy bell.

He is the fairy whom we love so well.

*(The Professor turns toward Peter.)*

You truant boy, you thought I told a lie!

Now you shall see my tadpole school march by!

JELF.

*(Enters. Turns his usual handspring, catches sight of Peter, stares at him, then pulls his little magic wand from his belt and salutes Professor Bullfrog.)*

Well! well! Good-morning, dear Professor Frog.

Your tadpoles dusted off your school-room log,

So they are ready! Lessons may begin.

To be an idle tadpole is a sin.

*(Jelf glances disapprovingly at Peter, shakes his head soberly, as though he could not understand a boy who would run away from school.)*

PETER.

*(Defensively addressing Jelf.)*

I ran away from school to-day.

I hate to work; I'd rather play.

You think I'm an easy one to fool —

So you pretend you have a school.

Now what's the game,

And what's YOUR name?

JELF (*merrily chanting*). Oh, I am little Jelf,  
The happy little elf.  
I came down to the earth from far above.  
No soul too sad or old,  
No heart too hard or cold  
For me to warm it with my power of Love.  
I wave my wand and all the world grows bright —  
And Hate is gone and Wrong is turned to Right.

*(Jelf blows softly on the flute, always hanging from his belt. The Tadpoles march in from back and right stage, led by the King of the Tadpoles, who carries a reed and wears a crown of bark. He leads them in a fancy little drill and then takes them to the back of stage. They march as flat-footed as possible, putting down each slipped foot with a little slap. Professor Bullfrog motions to the Tadpoles to seat themselves.)*

PROFESSOR BULLFROG.

*(Pulls out a pair of goggles, puts them on and then peers through them as though inspecting the row of Tadpoles.)*

My tadpole pupils, you have done your work  
In splendid shape. You never seem to shirk.  
Your drill was fine. Now you are tired, I fear;  
Rest, for your swimming hour is almost here.

PETER.

*(Seems to forget all about his fishing-pole and the reason that had made him play truant. Addresses Professor Bullfrog.)*

I hear your tadpole pupils will soon go  
Out swimming, where the water-lilies grow.  
Do lilies go to school, Professor Frog,  
And is their school-room on another log?



PROFESSOR BULLFROG (*soberly*). You little boys are sometimes very queer.

You think you only have a long school year.  
I wish all little boys like you could know  
The long school hours that lilies have to go;  
For they start early to a fairy school,  
Where they are slowly taught, by careful rule,  
To make a perfume that is sweet and rare  
So they can scatter it upon the air.

JELF (*eagerly*). They make their dresses too — do not forget —

Of petals, thick and waxed, to stand the wet;  
And they must learn to mind their fairy queen —  
The very loveliest lily ever seen!

*(Jelf strikes an attitude with his hand over his heart, as though lost in thought of the most beautiful of the water-lilies.)*

PROFESSOR BULLFROG.

*(Indulgently addressing Peter.)*

Oh, little boy, you'll have a big surprise!  
They're coming soon to dance before your eyes.

*(The Professor then turns toward his tadpole pupils who are teasing one another as they sit on the log.)*

It's time for swimming now, you must be gone.  
I hear you have some swimming races on.

*(The Tadpoles obey instantly, rise, salute their King and the Professor, march after the King in twos, once round the stage, then exit left stage as though on their way to the Water-Lily Pool. Professor Bullfrog follows. As they disappear, enters right stage the Queen of the Water-Lilies. She carries a cluster of water-lilies, does solo*

*dance to the music of McDowell's Water-Lily. As she finishes she discovers Peter and Jelf, standing back stage as though they had been watching the Tadpoles file down to Water-Lily Pool for their swimming lesson.)*

QUEEN OF THE WATER-LILIES.

*(Voice full of surprise.)*

Dear me! A boy! Why are you here to-day?  
What is your name and what have you to say?

PETER.

*(Hanging his head.)*

My name is Peter, sir, — no, miss, I mean —  
I — I'm not used to talking to a queen.  
I ran away and hoped the fish would bite,  
But — but — but NOTHING seems to go just right!

QUEEN *(gently)*. You foolish boy, the fish are all in  
school —

Deep, deep, deep down in Water-Lily Pool.

JELF.

*(Begins to turn handsprings to attract attention.)*

QUEEN.

*(Turns, nodding with a laugh toward Jelf.)*

Oh, what a merry, funny little elf!  
What is your name? I wonder if it's Jelf?

JELF.

*(Bows deeply with his magic wand over his heart.)*

Oh, I am little Jelf,  
The happy little elf.  
I came down to the earth from far above.

No soul too sad or old,  
No heart too hard or cold  
For me to warm it with my power of Love.  
I wave my wand and all the world grows bright —  
And Hate is gone and Wrong is turned to Right.

QUEEN.

*(Voice full of joy.)*

You visit Fairyland — I know you well —  
Why can't you charm him with your magic spell?  
*(Nods toward Peter.)*

And now it's time to call my dancing class.  
The ballroom is this velvet strip of grass.

*(Queen claps her hands three times — music MacDowell's Water-Lily. Water-Lilies enter from right and back stage. As they finish they take their positions scattered about the stage. The Tadpoles, led by their King, come filing back from their swimming lesson. Enter left stage. Each little Tadpole seeks a place for himself beside a water-lily. The King of the Tadpoles joins the Queen of the Water-Lilies center stage. Jelf and Peter are well towards the front left stage, where they had been standing while watching the Water-Lilies dance.)*

PROFESSOR BULLFROG.

*(Hops about pretending to inspect both the Tadpoles and Water-Lilies. A clock off stage strikes twelve, and Professor Bullfrog pulls out his turnip and looks at it solemnly while the clock is striking.)*

For busy folks the morning goes too soon —  
One hardly turns around before it's noon.  
No creature of the field or of the air  
But has his daily lessons to prepare

In Happyland. It takes us all to reap  
The dear world's harvests, and to try to keep  
Earth sweet, and brimming full of love and joy.  
This is no playground for a truant boy!

*(As the Professor speaks, Jelf softly waves his magic wand behind Peter's back. The Professor looks sternly at Peter.)*

PETER.

*(Voice full of repentance.)*

Dear old Professor, I can surely see  
This is no place for lazy boys like me.  
I did not know there was so much to do —  
I — I — I'd like to work out here for you.

PROFESSOR *(joyously)*. Do your OWN work — that is  
the only way —

If you would help, as we have heard you say.  
Earth has no place for idle, truant boys  
For they do nothing to increase its joys.  
Come, Tadpoles and sweet Lilies! Say farewell  
To this good little boy, for I can tell  
He now is fit to go upon his way,  
For he has learned a lesson here to-day.

*(Tadpoles and Lilies, two and two, walk past Peter. Tadpoles make a bow and Lilies a curtsy. The King and the Queen bow deeply as they pass. Tadpoles and Lilies form group left stage nearest spot where Water-Lily Pool is supposed to be.)*

JELF.

*(Gently addressing Peter.)*

Come, Peter, come, you need not look so sad!  
The world is calling you to make it glad.



Get through your work and then enjoy your play;  
That is the fairy rule for every day.

*(As Jelf speaks he keeps moving his magic wand gently to and fro.)*

PETER.

*(Picks up his lunch-box, school-books, and fishing-pole. Then takes his old straw hat from the ground and starts away, stops, looks back at Jelf and his new friends, speaks to them over his shoulder — that is towards the audience.)*

Good-bye, you Lilies, and you Tadpoles too,

*(Waves his hand toward them.)*

How very often I shall think of you,  
For you have taught me something to remember:  
Don't try to fish in school hours next September.

*(Peter then smiles and calls joyously)*

Good-bye! G-o-o-d-B-y-e!

*(Lilies wave their flowers in farewell to Peter, while Tadpoles call)*

Good-bye! G-o-o-d-B-y-e!

*(Sound of Jelf's flute is heard softly playing as curtain falls.)*



OCTOBER  
THE LOST FIREWOOD



## CHARACTERS

JELF, the Love Elf.

JOHN MORGAN, }

JACK HOWARD, }

JAMES WHITE, }

JEAN SMITH, }

four boys twelve years old.

WIDOW MURPHY, the Village Laundress.

WITCH, who dares to enter Happy Forest.

THREE BLACK CATS, attendants of Witch.

A CORN ELF, }

A WHEAT ELF, }

} glad to help in a miracle.

SUNBEAMS, any desired number. Always busy.

AUTUMN LEAVES, three of each — Crimson, Orange,  
Brown-and-Yellow.

MISS SUMAC, leader of the Autumn Leaves.

GRAPE MAIDENS, six or more in number.

FRUIT MAIDENS, a Pear, Apple, Peach, and Plum Maiden.

*Place.* The Happy Forest.

*Time.* The last of October, a few days before Hallowe'en.

Late afternoon of a bright, sunny day.

## STORY OF THE PLAY

FOUR boys go into Happy Forest to plan their Hallowe'en pranks. An old witch sees them coming and hides herself where she can hear their conversation. After a time she joins them, overcomes their fear of her and begins to offer suggestions for a very cruel type of mischief, directed against Widow Murphy, the poor laundress of the village. In the midst of her plotting, the witch gets up and starts to walk about in order to think of worse schemes. Suddenly she comes face to face with Jelf, the Love Elf. He waves



his magic wand over her and she flees, since she fears the power of love and knows that it will soften her heart if she once falls under its spell.

The boys, filled with astonishment and fright, are about to leave the Forest when they see the Widow entering. She has come out to gather firewood to replace that which has been stolen earlier in the day by one of their own number. They slip behind some clumps of sumac and the Widow walks about wearily until she sees a log that tempts her tired body. She sits down for a little rest and thinks aloud, revealing the hardships of her life and the fact that the stealing of the firewood had added greatly to her discomfort. She falls asleep and the boys creep out and run quickly from the Forest, first emptying her basket and carrying off the wood that she has so painfully gathered.

After they are gone, Jelf appears and waves his little golden wand to bring the Forest Spirits. They respond, fill the empty basket and vanish after putting a chaplet of lovely red leaves around the Widow's neck. No sooner are they gone than she awakes and is much astonished to discover what has been done for her. After thinking it over, she decides that the basket has been left behind by some one passing through the Forest, and she searches all about for the owner. Catching sight of Jelf, she decides that it is his, but when he calls her attention to the wreath about her neck, she is forced to believe that the gifts are meant for her. She thanks the Love Elf in her quaint Irish way and leaves the scene, joyfully carrying her wonderful present, the much-needed firewood completely forgotten.

Presently the four boys return, each one bearing a huge bundle of wood. They are filled with disappointment to find the Widow gone, and after a discussion decide to pile their bundles at her door on the night of Hallowe'en. They make new plans and disclose the fact that they intend to watch over the Widow Murphy and make her life an easier one in the future. Still carrying their firewood, they pass

out of the wood, leaving the scene to Jelf, who is filled with joy over the beautiful results of his magic, the power of Love.

### CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

THE four boys are normal, mischief-loving lads. JACK HOWARD, more forceful than the others, is naturally the leading spirit of the group. JOHN is of a thoughtful turn of mind, and is therefore less lively than JAMES and JEAN, who are always ready to bubble over with fun. Of the two, JEAN is the clown, while JAMES, having a strong dramatic impulse, expresses himself, whenever possible, in a mock-heroic manner.

For these parts select boys of ten, eleven, or twelve years of age, and have them wear their ordinary play suits.

JELF must be very loving in his manner and attractive and graceful in his movements. His voice should be soft and musical, since all of his speeches must reveal a sense of reverence and beauty of spirit. Choose a small boy of seven or eight and dress him in the typical elfin costume, with pointed and turned-up toes, peaked hat, and the one-piece, close-fitting garment common to those characters. Use some orange or gold-colored material with a bright sheen, in order to give the effect of real gold. His wand may be made of tightly rolled paper and covered with crêpe, tissue, gilt paper, or some of the cloth used in his costume.

WIDOW MURPHY. Assign this part to a twelve- or thirteen-year-old girl. She should appear in a much-worn dress of some coarse black material. Make with very long skirt and close-fitting waist. Complete costume by addition of kitchen apron (waist apron) and sunbonnet.

The WITCH character can be taken by a twelve-year-old girl with dark hair and eyes, and if possible, a high-pitched voice. This part calls for the traditional witch costume with full skirt, tight waist, and hip puffs, peaked hat, and long black cape hanging with most of the fullness at back.

Train the Witch to be very violent in her emotions and as quick as possible in all her movements.

**THE THREE BLACK CATS** provide parts for three very small boys who possess a very strong sense of the comic. The rôle of the smallest one may be taken by a child of five, or even four. In providing suits for these, select some black, woolly fabric that from a distance will give the appearance of fur. Make the outfits with head coverings, surmounted by two pointed ears. Sleeves should end in paw-shaped mittens covering the hands. Stuff out the legs and arms to give the proper shape. Complete costume with long tail, and whiskers firmly fastened to sides of cap. Make these of thread wire covered with black tissue paper. Train the two larger cats to perform a never-ending series of comical antics, while the smaller one should always wear a serious expression, since the humor of this part lies in the Cat's efforts and struggles with the Witch's cane which is much taller than himself.

**CORN ELF.** Select a tiny child for this part, since there are no spoken lines. Provide costume of orange or yellow, with sheath of long green leaves resembling those of corn. This should reach from a tight-gathered band at knees, to a point just below neck from where leaves are bent slightly backward to form setting for head and face. Child, if yellow-haired, needs no head covering, although he may wear a tiny elfin cap with a corn tassel on the peak of it. Green stockings or socks, and green or yellow slippers or shoes, complete the costume.

**WHEAT ELF.** Costume similar to that of Corn Elf except in color. Body of dress must be deep cream or pale yellow. Green points of sheath must imitate shape of foliage of wheat. Very light hair and cap with spray of wheat in peak. Green stockings and creamy or pale yellow shoes, or green shoes and yellow stockings.

**SUNBEAMS.** Choose very active and lively children for these parts. Here again is an opportunity to use some small actors, who should be light-haired — curly-haired —

if possible. Dresses may be made long and loose and slashed at bottom to show yellow slippers and stockings. Fasten dainty, spangled wings firmly between shoulders. Select a flame-colored material of filmy texture and gauzy stuff for wings. If desired, the bottom of dress and full sleeves may be bordered with spangles, as may also the golden bands confining the flowing hair.

**AUTUMN LEAVES.** Use tarlatan, cheese-cloth, or crêpe paper for these dresses. Exercise great care in choosing shades since the beauty of the leaves lies in their color effects. The skirts should be cut short and full and the waist gathered at the neck and finished off with a girdle of leaves. The little flat-crowned caps, made with a brim of leaves turned back from the face, may be decorated in the same manner as neck of dress, and if desired, the skirts can be trimmed with borders of leaves. Make the leaves of paper muslin or a heavy grade of rough paper. Color with crayon, crayola, or water-colors. Supply each Leaf Maiden with a long garland of leaves of appropriate color, mingled with a little brown.

**MISS SUMAC.** Pattern similar to that of Leaf Maidens, but must be of brilliant scarlet or blending of scarlet and crimson that is carried out in the chaplet of leaves worn about her neck, and also the leaf garland carried in her hands.

**GRAPE MAIDENS.** Flowing Grecian dresses of lavender, deep purple, and wine color, caught in at waist by girdles of grape leaves. Long narrow mantles of corresponding colors should hang from between shoulders at back. Hold in place by means of narrow bands, fastened at two sides at collar, crossed in front and passing around waist. Hair should be worn loose and bound with fillets of grape leaves, or clustered grapes, or a combination of both. The dresses are most effective when made of sheer or silken materials, as this plan provides ways in which the three colors may be combined in each costume, to produce most artistic and beautiful effects.



APPLE, PEAR, PEACH, and PLUM may wear dresses patterned after those of the Grape Maidens. Vary colors and fruits used in fillets to accord with character.

### PROPERTIES

GARLANDS of woodbine to hang on trees. Masses of sumac for background. Young trees or poles and foliage for imitation ones. Log for foreground. Two tall stepladders of same kind and height to furnish support for cats. (Conceal these behind one of the trees.) Market basket for Widow Murphy. Wand for Jelf. Cane with crook for smallest Black Cat. Bag of meal and loaf of bread for Corn and Wheat Elves. A small flashlight for each Sunbeam. Ten fancy baskets of varying shapes and appropriate filling of fruit and foliage. Three garlands of red leaves and three each of brown, orange, and yellow. One chaplet and garland of red leaves, fashioned in imitation of sumac. Small twigs and branches for Widow Murphy to gather in Happy Forest. Round yellow pieces of heavy cardboard for mock gold pieces that Sunbeams drop into the Widow's basket. Four huge shoulder-packs of firewood, tied into neat bundles.

### SCENE PLOT

X	X	X	X	X	X
Tree	Tree	Tree	Tree	Tree	Tree
Tree O	(Massed Sumac)			(Sumac	Shrubbery)
Entrance					Tree X
O Tree					{ O Ladder
					{ O Ladder

Log in foreground

### STAGE DIRECTIONS

R. means right of stage; C., center of stage; L., left; F., flat or scene running across back of stage. Up stage, away from footlights; Down stage, near footlights. The actor is supposed to be facing the audience.



## THE LOST FIREWOOD

SCENE: *An autumn day in Happy Forest. Two trees festooned with woodbine C. in F. Other trees and masses of sumac to L. and R. Two other trees to L. form natural gateway into Forest. To R. one very tall tree, with the trunk almost hidden in shrubbery. Fallen log in C. foreground.*

*Discovered: Jelf, sitting on log, waving wand and applauding the Sunbeams who dart about in a dance to soft, light music, broken now and then by a bird call. As they flit here and there, the Sunbeams throw sudden bright gleams from tiny flashlights hidden in their hands. They withdraw into the background, the music changes to a more lively measure and the Autumn Leaves, huddled here and there in C., L., and R., come forward and chase each other in a merry frolic. Dreamy music sounds and the Fruit Maidens enter L. and R. with Apple, Peach, Pear, and Plum Maidens in C. They give a slow, rhythmical dance. Suddenly a loud noise sounds through Forest. A clamor of cat-calls, hisses, spits, shrieks, and the running of angry feet, causes the happy proceedings to come to an abrupt end. The lovely beings in the Forest hastily conceal themselves with many dismayed looks, leaving only the Sunbeams who work busily, flashing light into dark places.*

*The tumult draws closer and the two Black Cats burst into Forest through entrance at L., chasing each other about with much hissing and meowing. High-voiced shrieks draw nearer and nearer and the old Witch runs angrily on the scene from R., scolding and shaking her broomstick. There is a peculiar thumping in the distance, followed by the entrance of another Black Cat, a smaller one, who carries the Witch's crooked cane. It is larger than himself and he bumps it along with much effort.*

## OLD WITCH.

*(Catching sight of Cats and chasing them round and round.)*

Get out of here! — Get out! — Go! — Scat!  
Go home! Back home, you clawing cat!  
Quit scratching! — Quit it! — Get away!  
Scat! — Scat! — Quick! — Scat! — Go home, I say!  
Mind me! — Get out! — Stop that, you two,  
Or I will beat you black and blue!

*(As Black Cats suddenly swarm up near-by tree and sit grinning just out of reach.)*

Scoot, Blackie! — Come right down from there!  
*(Vainly trying to brush them off the limb with her broom.)*

When I can get you, I declare  
I'll skin you both alive! — Get! — Scat!  
*(Dancing about tree and shaking fists in helpless rage.)*

Why do I keep a single cat!

*(She spies four boys about to enter Forest. Shaking her broom once more at cats in the tree, she hurriedly hides herself behind the bushes as boys enter Forest from L., talking earnestly with many gestures.)*

JACK. Here's just the place for us, boys!

*(Pointing to log in foreground.)*

Come this way.

JAMES. There's no one round to hear a word we say!

JEAN. And back home, in the village, there was  
bound

To be that crowd of girls come snoopin' round —

*(He breaks off to give an imitation of the sneaking girls. Old Witch gets up from behind bush, steals nearer and*

*flattens herself behind tree-trunk where she can hear better.)*

*(John and Jack seat themselves on log. James and Jean sit down on the ground, take out their knives and proceed to hollow out two big pumpkins they have been carrying under their arms.)*

JACK. Oh, boys, just think! It's almost Hallowe'en!  
*(Hugs himself with joy.)*

JOHN. Let's have some fun this year — real fun, I mean.

I'm tired of Jack o' Lanterns —

*(Here he threatens with doubled fists the two being made by Jean and James.)*

JAMES.

*(Breaking in with theatrical pose of great disdain.)*

Tic-tacks Too-oo-oo-oo.

*(With long feeling whine on last.)*

JEAN.

*(Wiping eyes as if in deep grief at unpleasant prospect.)*

And soaping windows!

*(Makes gestures of righteous abhorrence.)*

JOHN.

*(Thoughtfully chewing blade of grass.)*

Let's get something new!

JACK *(hopefully)*. The Squire's fence.

JEAN.

*(In quick derision.)*

Don't you remember when

We tore it down? It just went up again?

*(Comical gesture of building complete fence in two seconds.)*

He did n't say a word when that was done,  
But just —

*(Imitating nasal voice of Squire.)*

“Boys must be boys” —

So that's no fun!

JOHN.

*(Still busy with his thinking.)*

But surely there is some scheme we can get —  
Some things that we have never pulled off yet —

*(His voice trails off thoughtfully, and for a few moments there is silence in the Forest.)*

JEAN.

*(Suddenly drawing gourd from pocket and beating head with it.)*

She's empty, boys!

*(Again thumping head with expression of mock despair.)*

Hear? — hear that hollow sound?

*(Despairingly holding up gourd.)*

She's empty as this old dry gourd I found!

JOHN.

*(Still pursuing his line of thought undisturbed.)*

The Widow Murphy — now — *(hopefully)* she's  
always here —

JAMES.

*(Interrupting with a great show of indignation.)*

Say something new! We torment her all year —

JEAN.

*(Suddenly breaking into a laugh and slapping his knees with glee.)*

I drank her milk this evening. *(Winks at others.)*

I'll be fat

Before Old Murphy finds it's not the cat!

*(Breaks off to laugh.)*

JAMES.

*(Turning to Jean and holding out hand in mock solemnity.)*

Shake, Fatty, shake! I played her one neat trick —  
I took her wood —

*(With increasing solemnity of manner.)*

I DID that — every stick!

*(Shaking finger slowly.)*

When the good lady cometh, I desire  
That she be not in haste to light a fire  
Before she scout for kindling with a will —  
For Dad says work makes food taste better still.

*(Reseats himself gravely as boys applaud speech.)*

JACK.

*(With quick look at western sky.)*

Get busy, boys, we have no time to play —

*(As James tickles Jean.)*

No monkey-shines! Who has that scheme —

OLD WITCH.

*(Suddenly stepping out from behind tree and hobbling forward.)*

Oh, say!



*(Continuing quickly as boys jump to feet in great fright.)*

Don't run, boys. *(Reassuringly.)* I can see by all  
your looks

You've formed ideas of me from story-books.

They are all wrong *(angrily)*, and folks believe  
these lies

Because I happen to look old and wise;

And yet, nobody knows what fun can be

Until he tries some, once, that's planned by me.

*(Motions reassuringly and boys sit down again.)*

I hear you want some fine new mischief — *(Nod-  
ding head.)* Why,

I know a thousand things that you can try.

I'm just the one to plan your Hallowe'en;

For on that night, you know, I am the Queen

Of all the world, and *(impressively)* as the hours go  
by

I show folks what can happen, when I fly

Above the earth, high on my broomstick, where

A million witches sail right through the air!

*(Boys shiver and draw closer together.)*

*(Old Witch seats herself on ground at a little distance,  
with wise caution lest she frighten them away. Jelf leaves  
the sumac shrubs at C. F., and moves forward noiselessly  
until he stands behind tree that Witch has just left.)*

WITCH.

*(Looking about her uneasily.)*

I feel an influence. Is there some one round?

JOHN.

*(Who is less frightened than the others.)*

No, no one but we five here on the ground.

WITCH.

*(Still more reassuringly.)*

Now, all sit still — quite still — and you shall find  
How witches bring their bright ideas to mind.

*(Throwing back her head and rolling her eyes in a terrifying manner, she recites slowly and in a deep, hollow voice.)*

Snake's egg! Frog's leg! Sting of bee!

Send a bright thought here to me!

*(The Witch appears to fall into a trance, jerking her head and limbs while the boys watch her in terror. Jean starts to rise and run away, but is pulled down by the others. At last, when boys are almost paralyzed with fear, the Witch opens her eyes, smiles and waves her broomstick enthusiastically.)*

*(Brightly.)* Oh, boys, the very thing for you I  
know!

This Widow that you named a while ago —.

BOYS.

*(Forgetting their fright in scornful protest.)*

The Widow Murphy!

JOHN. We just tease and tease

Her every day — all year — just when we please.

WITCH. But does n't she get wild with rage and  
blame

The four of you? And call you every name?

JAMES. No. She comes out and says,

*(Imitating Widow.)*

“Boys, have your fun,

But leave my bit of fence when you are done.”

And goes back in the house. What sport is that?  
She does n't have the temper of a cat!

WITCH (*very decidedly*). She won't get angry at such  
silly tricks.

Now, if you get her into some bad fix,  
You boys might make her cry with rage or fright,  
And that WOULD be a most amusing sight!

(*Boys look uneasy.*)

Next Monday, say, suppose that some of you  
Sneak up and cut her clothes-line almost through  
In several places. Then when she hangs out,  
The thing will break and throw the clothes about  
Right in the mud. She'll wash again — Ho! Ho!

(*Stops to cackle.*)

And have to buy a clothes-line too, you know.

(*Pauses to think deeply for a moment.*)

Then call on her some day when she is gone  
And fix her boiler. Smear some good grease on,  
Or, cover it inside with grease and soot,  
So she won't notice. She might go and put  
Somebody's clothes right into it — Hee! Hee!  
Just think of what a nice mess that will be!

(*Cackles again.*)

That stain will not come out — I bet my shoes! —  
And she will rub and rub and have to lose  
A fine big wash. I'll walk a while and think —  
And we will find a way to use some ink.

(*Witch rises and strolls up stage toward C., with broom-stick through her two elbows (behind her), and head down in thought. Boys sit and wait, afraid to look around. As*

*she nears tree, Old Witch beckons to cats to come down, shaking fist at them violently, but they merely grin in reply. As she lowers eyes she sees Jelf, who has stepped out into path and now stands directly in front of her, waving his shining wand before her startled face. She gives a shrill cry, drops her broomstick and hobbles wildly away, still continuing to shriek, and followed by the little black cat who bumps the cane noisily along after her. The other cats remain in the tree where they continue to sit on the bough, expressing themselves now and then in their own comic way, and apparently approving of each other and all that goes on. The boys jump to their feet in great fright at the Witch's sudden disappearance, but see no one around and so stand stock still in bewilderment.)*

JACK.

*(Recovering himself first.)*

What made her go? Did you see anything?

JEAN. No, but I tell you I could dance and sing.

*(Stops to swallow.)*

Because she's gone,

*(Looks around uneasily.)*

I hope she won't come back

Do — do you think now she'll be on our track,

And haunt us?

*(Breaks off in fear.)*

JACK *(sturdily)*. Fraidy! No. It's getting late

*(Looking about uneasily.)*

Let's go!

JAMES.

*(Pointing toward left.)*

We can't! There's Murphy at the gate.

*(Widow Murphy comes slowly into the woods and goes*

*about, stooping stiffly now and then to pick up a stick and put it into the basket hanging on her arm. When she reaches the log, she stands irresolutely for a moment and then sits down with a weary sigh.)*

WIDOW MURPHY.

*(With a slight trace of Irish brogue.)*

Faith! And I'm tired to the bone to-day  
And some one took my kindling wood away;  
And now I can have neither bite nor sup  
Until I come and pick some branches up.  
And some stray beast, in spite of all I do,  
Will get the top from off my milk-can too —  
And so my morning pint's gone — every bit —  
'T was for my mush that I was saving it;  
But I would take my dish of porridge dry  
And thankful if I'd fire to cook it by!

*(Pauses a moment and sighs deeply.)*

Sure, and a great big family wash for nine —  
And seven of them children — is a fine  
Good way to use a body's strength! By four  
I was that tired I could go no more;  
And I did want my fire and bit of rest  
But I must come out here —

*(Breaks off to shake her head dolefully, then looks about a moment and resumes in a more cheerful manner.)*

Perhaps it's best —  
For there is nothing like God's trees and air

*(Sniffing appreciatively.)*

To rest a body's spirit when it's fair  
Like to give up.



*(Looking all about the Forest.)*

It's sweet here!

*(After a moment of quiet.)*

Now I know

Back home in Ireland, it would just be so.

*(Spreading hands.)*

The fairies in the thicket hereabout

Would all be creepin' close to help me out —

And it would be a wonder thing to tell

Of all their pretty ways and coaxing spell.

*(She breaks off to shake herself.)*

Come, Biddy, stop your dreamin' — It's no good!

Rest here a bit and then go find your wood.

*(She sits very still for a moment or two, now and then yawning widely. Soon her head begins to nod. Seeing this, Jelf steps from behind his tree and waves his wand toward rear. Very silently those hidden in the sumac slip out in groups of twos and threes and disappear off stage to R.)*

*(The Widow Murphy's nods become deeper. She starts to fall, but instead slips off the log to the ground, her arm resting on it as she sleepily saves herself. In a moment her head sinks down to a more comfortable position and she is lost in slumber. The boys, who have been watching her, creep out, empty her basket, seize the wood she has gathered and run off to R. Jelf remains looking after them in rather a puzzled way, until his eyes happen to fall upon the wand that he is still unconsciously waving in his hand. He smiles delightedly and points it three times toward each of the four points of the compass. There is a moment of waiting while a bright light searches out the shining wand and plays upon it with slowly changing colors.)*

*(Soon soft music is heard and the Fruit Maidens enter.)*

*They are led by Miss Sumac who wears a chaplet of beautiful scarlet leaves about her neck and carries a brilliant spray in her arms. After a swaying dance, they approach Widow Murphy, forming a dainty background, while the Leaf Maiden lines the big basket with the leaves she carries. Then she steps back and the Apple, Peach, Pear, and Plum Maidens draw near and gracefully empty their pretty baskets as they pile their gifts into the larger one. These withdraw and the Grape Maidens top the mound of fruit with their purple clusters. The music becomes more lively in character as the Corn and Wheat Elves skip brightly upon the scene from R., and place a bag of meal and a huge loaf of bread on the log beside the Widow Murphy's elbow. Last of all, their Leader takes the gorgeous red chaplet from about her own neck and silently slips it over the head of the sleeper. At this the Sunbeams dart toward C. front stage and dance joyously, each one dropping shining yellow pieces into the basket, as the various movements of the figures draw them near the unconscious woman. Slowly the other conspirators join in and move about stage to slip off R. and L. as their rhythmic progress brings them to the wings.)*

*(When scene is clear, Jelf comes down stage to C., and begins to caper about, throwing up his cap and jigging in an excess of joy. The Widow moves several times, throws back her head, blinks her eyes, stretches and yawns and then rises stiffly, supporting herself on the log.)*

#### WIDOW MURPHY.

*(Remembering her troubles and scolding herself briskly.)*

Sure, Bridget Murphy, you're the great one now  
To drop aslape on every fallin' bough  
And not a bit of wood or bite to ate!  
Say, woman, pick your sticks — it's nigh too late  
To see here in the woods. You must be on

To cook your mush — Now, where's me basket gone?

*(Looking about she discovers the basket and stands transfixed with joy and surprise. Falling to her knees and utterly oblivious to the chaplet about her neck, she examines her treasures with trembling hands.)*

Well! — Look at that now! — See this apple here  
And won't it be the biggest one this year?  
And mind the peaches with their smilin' blush  
Just like a colleen's — and a skin like plush!

It makes a body's poor mouth water fair  
Just to be lookin' at this shinin' pear!  
And these be grand grapes now — so big and blue!  
One can fair see the sweetness peepin' through!

*(She stoops lower as she suddenly catches the golden glitter at the bottom.)*

Faith and what's that so bright? Gold?

*(She bends lower and stares into basket, rubbing her unbelieving eyes.)*

Bless my eyes!

But this is surely now a big surprise!

*(Breaking off to rise and look all about her.)*

Oh, Biddy, you'rê a foine one — dreamin' still  
Of Irish meadows where the Wee Folk fill  
A body's basket to help out a bit.  
But 't is not Ireland!

*(Falling into a more matter-of-fact tone.)*

Now, this treasure — It

Was left here where some wealthy one, I mind,  
Was passin' through and leavin' it behind.

And now I'm knowin' at this second, he  
Is huntin' where these missin' things can be!  
It's me must find him, while there's still the  
light —

Sure, I'll be gettin' not a sup to-night!

*(Not noticing the presence of Jelf, she goes about, searching the Forest thoroughly and ending by standing for some time with her hands shading her eyes, as she looks earnestly off into the distance in C. As she turns toward down stage, she catches sight of Jelf and starts forward eagerly.)*

My sakes, but yonder is a merry boy!

This must be his that he can hop for joy.

*(Coming forward she deposits basket at Jelf's feet with an admonishing.)*

It's dancin' well you are, but have a care  
And tend some to your heapin' basket there!

*(She points to basket and stoops over him to say in a stage whisper.)*

Excuse the likes of me, but I looked in  
And saw a glitter — you had best begin  
To leave the Forest, then, and go your way,  
And find your mother while it's still the day.  
I had a boy once — and I fear it's bad  
To trust such treasure to so small a lad.

*(Jelf's eyes twinkle and he hops about harder in his merriment.)*

JELF. But, Lady, this big basket is not mine.

WIDOW MURPHY. Some other's then —

JELF *(interrupting)*. No! No! For all that fine  
Long hour you were asleep, I played about,  
And not a single soul went in or out.

*(He steps closer to Widow to touch the sumac hanging round her neck.)*

Who made this lovely, crimson thing you wear?  
The same hands must have lined that basket there.  
*(Pointing.)*

WIDOW MURPHY.

*(Noticing wreath for first time and touching it admiringly.)*

How sweet and pretty! Now, who could it be  
Would put this on a plain old soul like me!  
*(She starts to search the woodland all over again.)*

JELF.

*(Recalling her.)*

No use to look. It's yours. I know it's true.  
This basket *(Pointing)* — does n't it belong to you?

WIDOW MURPHY.

*(After examining basket closely.)*

The basket's mine — there is n't any doubt —  
For it's me own two hands that brought it out  
Straight to this place, to hold the twigs I found.  
The fairies must have filled it, I'll be bound!  
And yet — this is not Ireland! — It is queer!

*(Suddenly turning to Jelf.)*

Say now — this wood — what do you call it here?

JELF.

*(Looking about lovingly for a moment, answers the widow's question. As he speaks in a reverent tone, a light seeks the bright wand waving in his hand and follows it wherever it goes. Soft music is heard in a beautiful undertone, accompanying the entire speech. The woodland is transformed by a wonderful glow that slowly changes*



*from color to color, each far more lovely than the preceding one.)*

This is the Happy Forest. In this place  
No one is sick of heart or sad of face.  
There is no pain or weariness to fear,  
For Woe and Evil cannot dwell in here.  
No grief, that weighs the soul down, can remain  
Where loving thoughts and deeds of kindness reign,  
And worries flee like snow before the spring,  
Here in this spot where Love is always king.

WIDOW MURPHY. A grand, sweet place! It's just like  
Ireland now —

For Love is whisperin' out from every bough.  
This basket, then, it's mine. What shall I do  
And who will I be thankin' for it — you?

*(Comes nearer to look at Jelf long and curiously.)*

You are a funny lad now, 'pears to me —  
Would you be tellin' what your name might be?

JELF.

*(Speaking joyously while the changing lights play over him.)*

Oh, I am little Jelf —  
The happy little elf.  
I came down to the earth from far above.  
No soul too sad or old,  
No heart too hard or cold  
For me to warm it with my power of Love.  
I wave my wand and all the world grows bright —  
And Hate is gone and Wrong is turned to Right.

WIDOW MURPHY (*very tenderly*). You are a sweet one! I could love you, dear!

Sure, often I shall look for you in here.

The elves, that served the shoemaker so well —

You mind the dear old story that they tell,

And how the wife, though mortal, served them too?

Is there a bit, now, I could do for you?

JELF.

(*Smiling radiantly at her question.*)

In this great world is many a burdened heart

To be made lighter. We can do our part.

Go, take the Love that made your own life glad

And pass it on to some one who is sad.

Look for a chance to be a kindly friend

And then the chain we make will have no end —

And all the world will smile with happiness.

WIDOW MURPHY.

(*Nodding approvingly.*)

And I will go, then. May the Heavens bless

Your tender heart! But I will come each day

And sure it is I'll serve you some good way.

(*She disappears through the gateway to L. In a short time the four boys come upon scene from R. They are apparently in great haste and each one carries a heavy burden of sticks that have been tied into neat bundles. Dropping their loads from their shoulders to the ground, they stand looking around in a very disappointed manner.*)

JACK (*dolefully*). Aw, fellows, she is gone!

JAMES.

(*Kicking his pile of sticks angrily.*)

Pshaw!

JOHN. What a shame!

But I can't see that any one's to blame.

JACK. But here we are — too late with all our wood —

JEAN.

*(Mopping face comically with handkerchief.)*

Can't help it. I sure hurried all I could!

JACK. What now?

JOHN.

*(Eagerly coming to the rescue.)*

I know! Let's put all this away —

*(Separates one bundle from the other three and takes one of small bunches of sticks in hand.)*

One bunch of sticks will last her for a day —  
And then on Hallowe'en we'll bring some more  
And pile them up around her kitchen door.

JAMES.

*(Patting John playfully on back.)*

Good work, boy, but I have a feeling here

*(Placing hand over heart.)*

That I'll be doing tricks like that all year!

JEAN.

*(Bowing elaborately, with both hands clasped over bosom.)*

I know the lad to clean off all her snow.

JACK. And I will even up old scores, and go  
To hang her clothes-line out on stormy days.

JOHN. Let's all keep watch! There will be many  
ways  
To help.

JACK. The things she needs can just appear —

ALL. And we'll make Hallowe'en last all the year!

*(They shoulder their bundles and go off stage to L., in  
direction taken by Widow Murphy.)*

JELF.

*(Looking after them and counting on his fingers as he  
talks.)*

One happy and four happy — that makes five —

No, six! — for I'm the happiest soul alive!

*(Very lively music that coaxes Jelf until he dances a jig  
while the curtain falls.)*





**NOVEMBER**  
**THE LITTLE GRAY LADY**



## CHARACTERS

**ELIZABETH ANN**, a spoiled little girl about eight, who has always had every wish gratified, consequently is selfish and discontented.

**MR. MOON MAN**, boy of twelve, with round full face.

**LITTLE GRAY LADY WHO POLISHES THE STARS**, girl of twelve, rather small and slender.

**BAD DREAM**, tall, thin boy of ten.

**JELF, HAPPYLAND'S LOVE ELF**, boy of eight.

**BOTTLE OF MILK**, girl of nine.

**LOAF OF BREAD**, boy of nine.

**TURKEY**, boy of eight.

**PINK ROSE**, girl of seven.

**CRANBERRIES**, girls of seven.

**STAR FAIRIES**, girls of six or seven.

*Place.* Elizabeth Ann's bedroom in the Martin home on Walnut Hill.

*Time.* Almost midnight Thanksgiving Eve.

## STORY OF THE PLAY

**ELIZABETH ANN** was a spoiled little girl who had always had her own way and anything she wanted, and was never satisfied. Thanksgiving Eve, after fussing all day, she went to bed still cross. During the night she was visited by **Bad Dream** who made up his mind to teach her a lesson. She was frightened when she wakened and found him in her room. The **Moon Man** appeared and asked what was the trouble. He was sad when **Bad Dream** told him about the naughty little girl. He summoned **Jelf**, the **Love Elf**, with his magic wand. **Jelf** thought it well for **Elizabeth Ann** to see how much others were doing, so with his flute he called **Pink Rose** to tell her about staying in a dark room with a

sick child all day. Then came Loaf of Bread, Bottle of Milk, Turkey, Cranberries — all on their errands of kindness. Finally, the Little Gray Lady who polishes the stars came, some of her stars with her. She has had a hard day, for it seems that when children are cross the stars cannot shine so brightly. Elizabeth Ann felt badly when she found how much unhappiness her ill-temper brought. Through Jelf she found the way to happiness.

### CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

**ELIZABETH ANN.** Nightgown. Hair down on shoulders.

**MR. MOON MAN.** Loose garment of grayish blue. Have disk about his face covered with silver paper. Head covering made like a cup. The disk takes the place of a full moon.

**LITTLE GRAY LADY.** Loose flowing garment of gray. Wears a maid's cap and carries a polishing cloth.

**BAD DREAM.** Dressed in black with a long red tail. His sleeves are huge, resembling the wings of a bat. His tail should be long enough so he can use it as a whip to strike the floor with when he is angry. It hangs over his arm when not in use. He wears a close-fitting black hood and a black mask with red eyes. At intervals he spreads his wings and makes a curious, high-pitched screaming call.

**JELF, THE LOVE ELF.** Gold suit, with pointed toes, short cape, little gold feather in his peaked cap.

**BOTTLE OF MILK.** Cap made of pasteboard to resemble the top of a bottle of milk. She wears a long, close, plain dress of white muslin, gathered in at the bottom on a wire to give it the shape of a milk bottle.

**LOAF OF BREAD.** Unbleached muslin made over a wire frame. Shape round in front from neck to bottom. Front painted brown to imitate crust of bread. When dressed, the boy should look like a loaf of bread that has been supplied with legs and arms.

**TURKEY.** Gray calico, loose flowing garment with imita-

tion tail. Drape about feet in imitation of turkey legs. Gray cap with red comb. Turkey should gobble often.

CRANBERRIES. Wine-colored cheesecloth dresses. Chains of cranberries about neck and strand of cranberries binding hair. Carry white dishes with mounds of cranberry jelly.

PINK ROSE. Loose dress of rose-pink cheesecloth. Hair flowing with wreath of rose leaves about head. Girdle of rosebuds. Carries one large rose.

STAR FAIRIES. Different colored tarletans, blue, pink, red, white, yellow, and lavender. Skirts must be very full and short and cut into points. Sleeves are full and short. Bottom of skirt and bodices covered with gold stars. They carry opera glasses in order to have them at hand when they wish to peer down at the world.

### STAGE DIAGRAM

ELIZABETH ANN'S room should be arranged as nearly as possible to represent the luxurious surroundings one might expect to find in the room of the only child of wealthy parents. Arrange to have one large, low window at center back stage. Its white curtains are fastened back. Little white bed is close by the window, leaving space for one person to stand at side of bed facing audience.





## THE LITTLE GRAY LADY

SCENE. *When curtain rises, Elizabeth Ann, in her nightgown, is seen sitting on a small chair by the side of the bed nearest audience. She is brushing her hair and yawning broadly.*

ELIZABETH ANN. Dear me, but this has been a horrid day!

I hate it when there's no one here to play.

*(She yawns again aloud and then brushes her hair crossly for a few seconds as though it might be full of tangles.)*

I never saw such crazy hair as mine —

I brush my arm off and it will not shine!

*(Voice off stage is heard calling.)*

Elizabeth Ann! Now, hurry up in there!

To-morrow you'll be like a little bear!

ELIZABETH ANN *(with irritation)*. You need not shout at me, you cranky maid,

And I'll not hurry. I am not afraid

Of you, and I'm not deaf, I'd have you know!

If you don't want to wait I wish you'd go!

*(Voice.)* You are the crossest little girl in town.

Now do jump into bed and settle down.

ELIZABETH ANN.

*(Begins to whimper.)*

Don't go! I just hate to be left alone —

For everything begins to creak and groan.

*(Child walks slowly about the room, seeming to turn out*

*the lights, all but one. She runs her curtain high and then jumps into bed.)*

(Sighing.) That old cross Hilda, and my mother too,

Just think I'm bothersome and bad — hoo! hoo!

*(Begins to cry.)*

I wish my Daddy'd stay at home with me,  
Or get a little sister, so there'd be  
Somebody else to live here. We could play  
Out in the dirt and make mud-pies all day.

*(She gives a little sigh, then tucks herself down among the bedclothes and falls asleep.)*

#### BAD DREAM.

*(Enters right stage. Walks solemnly round the room, peering this way and that, and making his queer little sound now and then. Goes to side of bed nearest the window, then looks down at the sleeping child.)*

Cross and fussy — Oh, how sad

Going off to sleep, so mad

And so cross! I hate to preach,

But this bad child's mine to teach

*(Looks down at her and shakes his head as he speaks.)*

A lesson — she is so ungrateful —

That life to her is always hateful.

*(Bad Dream walks close to the window, leans out and gives three long, low moans, and then wipes his eyes with his tail. His cries awaken Elizabeth Ann. She sits up in bed, rubs her eyes sleepily and looks about her, startled.)*

ELIZABETH ANN. My goodness gracious! What's this thing in here?

I must be seeing double — dear, oh, dear!

Why, this must be a dreadful, DREADful dream!  
I just believe I'll scream, and scream and scream!

BAD DREAM.

*(Clears his throat to attract her attention, then speaks in deep voice, flapping his long tail to and fro as though to add impressiveness to his words.)*

Say, little girl, you just keep still,  
To-night you have to do MY will!

ELIZABETH ANN.

*(Anger overcoming her fear at his appearance.)*

What are you doing in my room?  
Get out! I wish I had a broom  
To chase you! You are not polite  
To come and give me such a fright.

BAD DREAM. Oh, what a foolish crosspatch! You  
Are seeing your own thoughts come true.  
You whined and fussed the whole day long.  
You surely know how very wrong  
That is, so I was sent to-night  
To help you learn to see things right.

*(Bad Dream then walks with great dignity once round the room, flapping his long red tail on the floor as he goes. Elizabeth Ann looks at him with eyes round with wonder. The Moon Man suddenly appears at the window and the room becomes brighter.)*

MR. MOON MAN. Hello, Bad Dream, you may need  
me.

I hope this girl will soon agree  
To try and make this old world bright.  
I surely need her help at night.

ELIZABETH ANN.

*(Timidly clasps her little hands.)<sup>1</sup>*

But, Mr. Moon, I'm just a child!

BAD DREAM *(interrupting)*. A spoiled one, too, and cross and wild.

MR. MOON MAN.

*(Shakes his head sadly and addresses the audience.)*

If little children only knew  
When they are bad, and ugly too,  
What troubles they may cause, my dears —  
Excuse me, while I dry my tears.

*(Voice trembles and he wipes his tears with large yellow handkerchief, which he pulls from cap behind his ear. He then disappears from the window. As he drops out of sight, Jelf, the Happy Tribe Love Elf, appears. He bows to Elizabeth Ann and to the Bad Dream.)*

The Moon Man said to come in here,  
So if you need me I'll be near.

BAD DREAM *(crossly)*. Now, who are *you* and what's  
YOUR name?

You may be sorry that you came.

JELF.

*(Gives a merry little laugh, then chants.)*

Oh, I am little Jelf,  
The happy little elf.  
I came down to the world from far above.  
No soul too sad or old,  
No heart too hard or cold  
But I can warm it with my power of love.



I wave my wand and all the world grows bright,  
And Hate is gone, and Wrong is turned to Right.

BAD DREAM. A Love Elf! well, then, Love Elf, you  
may stay.

If you will show us what you've done to-day  
To make this sad old world a happier place,  
And bring the sunshine to some tired face.

JELF.

*(Blows on the silver flute that always hangs at his belt. Elizabeth Ann moves over nearer to the edge of her bed as though she would fall out in her wonder. Pink Rose enters from right stage, with light, graceful step.)*

PINK ROSE.

*(Addressing Elizabeth Ann.)*

Hello! I'm a little Pink Rose,  
The kind that your own garden grows.  
All day in a dark, shaded room,  
I cheered a sick child with my bloom  
And perfumed the dull, heavy air  
To cheer a sad heart I found there;  
And a pale little face smiled with glee.  
There are dozens of roses like me  
You can pick as you stop in your play,  
But you whine and you fuss all the day.

BAD DREAM.

*(Interrupting crossly and pointing through the window.)*

Out there is your garden of flowers  
Just fading in sunshine and showers.  
Oh, think of the little bouquets  
That you could send sick folks these days!

JELF (*soothingly*). That's the reason, Elizabeth Ann,  
 We must all do the best that we can.  
 It's a shame for a rich child like you  
 Not to think of the things she COULD do.

(*Tapping is heard on the door. Enter left stage Bottle of Milk.*)

BOTTLE OF MILK (*joyously*). I am a bottle of good,  
 rich milk

To make your cheeks as soft as silk;  
 And here comes a loaf of sweet, white bread  
 For the little lame girl in her bed.

(*Enter Loaf of Bread — Bottle of Milk addressing her.*)

Dear me, Bread, I am glad you're here!  
 My heart was really full of fear  
 Because I missed you, for we know  
 Just how small Molly's eyes will glow  
 When mother brings us to her bed.  
 Do you remember what she said  
 Just yesterday, when we were there? —  
 "I am so lucky with your care,  
 My little room, so clean and sweet,  
 And this good bread and milk to eat."

(*Bread and Milk both point accusingly at Elizabeth Ann.*)

And you —

And you —

What do you do  
 But just complain  
 The whole day through —

LOAF OF BREAD (*gently*). Dear comrade, you and I  
must go,

For it's Thanksgiving Eve, you know;  
And so the two of us must try  
To make a dinner, you and I —  
With not one piece of pie or cake,  
Or other things that mothers make,  
For dinner on Thanksgiving Day;  
But little Molly's heart is gay  
With grateful thoughts when she is fed.  
She makes a feast of milk and bread.

*(Some one is heard laughing just outside the door.  
Mr. Turkey enters with great gusto and struts around the  
room.)*

MR. TURKEY. I am a turkey, for, you see,  
Thanksgiving dinners must have ME!

*(Mr. Turkey takes his place beside Bread and Milk  
where he is in plain sight of Elizabeth Ann; addressing  
Bread and Milk.)*

I came here just to go with you —  
And brought my nice, rich stuffing too.

*(Cranberries enter and take their places in a half-circle  
around Mr. Turkey.)*

ONE OF THE CRANBERRIES. We are the cranberries,  
sweet yet tart,  
All ready now to take our part  
In Molly's dinner. Oh, what fun!  
Won't she just be the happy one?

## MINCE PIE.

*(Enters right stage, walks with much pride and somewhat smartly.)*

I'm Mr. Mince Pie, and my lot  
Is to be served to-morrow, hot,  
And tempting for our girl who lies  
In bed and smiles with glad surprise.

## BAD DREAM.

*(Scornfully addressing Elizabeth Ann.)*

Turkey! Cranberries and Mince Pie!  
For something more, of course, you'd cry!

LOAF OF BREAD. Come, all of you, for we must go.  
And find our way through deep, deep snow.

*(They exit right stage, Bread and Milk walking arm in arm, Turkey and Mince Pie, while Cranberries follow.)*

BAD DREAM *(sarcastically)*. There's quite a difference, I would say,

In dinners on Thanksgiving Day.

*(Little bell is heard tinkling merrily outside the door. Little Gray Lady, who polishes the stars, enters right stage. She is carrying her polishing cloth, and as she crosses the room she stops and polishes the candlesticks on the table. Then she approaches the bed where the child is still sitting, spellbound at the strange sights. Jelf and Bad Dream drop back toward the window, through which the Moon Man is again seen peering and throwing his beams into the room.)*

LITTLE GRAY LADY *(sadly)*. Oh, never have I had  
to work

So hard. *(Sighs.)* I dare not ever shirk

A moment of the long, brave day

While all the Sunbeams romp and play;  
For I must keep the dear stars bright  
That they may light the world at night.  
Polish! polish! all day long,  
And harder still (*Sighs again*) when things go  
wrong.

*(Little Gray Lady sighs still once more as though she were discouraged at the amount of work piled up for her to do.)*

JELF.

*(Steps forward courteously.)*

Little Gray Lady from the sky,  
I think I know the reason why  
You had to work so hard to-day —  
This child was cross all through her play.

LITTLE GRAY LADY.

*(Looks at him in surprise.)*

How wise you are and yet how small!  
Did you come at the Moon Man's call?

JELF (*cheerily*). Oh, I am little Jelf,

The happy little elf.

I came down to the world from far above.

No soul too sad or old,

No heart too hard or cold

But I can warm it with my power of love.

I wave my wand and all the world grows bright,

And Hate is gone, and Wrong is turned to Right.

LITTLE GRAY LADY (*gently*). Dear Jelf, I know now  
who you are —

The Love Elf! You must travel far.



*(Turns toward Elizabeth Ann. Speaks gently but reprovingly.)*

I've brought the stars that you may see  
It is not right for you to be  
Just thinking always of yourself.  
Learn how to love from this small elf.

*(Little Gray Lady claps her hands three times and the Star Fairies appear. Three enter from right stage and three from left. They do a few simple dance steps about the room, then form circle around the bed. Jelf has slipped to the head of the bed, where, unseen by her, he waves his magic wand gently over the head of Elizabeth Ann.)*

ONE OF THE STAR FAIRIES. Our Little Gray Lady is sad,

*(All of the Star Fairies cover their faces with end of sashes and sniffle.)*

For a child who is peevish or bad  
Grieves the stars until tears dim their light,  
That she works, oh, so hard to keep bright.

*(Addressing Elizabeth Ann.)*

You, girl, you spoiled us all to-day.

*(Stars begin to cry again, and the Little Gray Lady comes quickly to them, places her arm around each one and polishes eyes with polishing cloth.)*

BAD DREAM *(interrupting sternly)*. We'd like to hear what you can say!

ELIZABETH ANN *(wistfully)*. Dear Stars, I did not know that I

Could dim the candles in the sky.

LITTLE GRAY LADY.

*(Turns from her work for a moment.)*

There's so much work for all to do,

*(Shakes her head impressively.)*

Yes, even for a child like you.

No one can live to please himself.

Is not this true, dear little Jelf?

JELF.

*(Eagerly waves his magic wand.)*

Yes, oh, yes, Elizabeth Ann,

Keep your eyes open and you can

Be busy, and find work is play,

For Love will brighten every day.

*(While Jelf is speaking, Bad Dream steals away silently, and with his red tail hung over his arm, as though he need not flap it any more. When the Little Gray Lady sees him leaving, she motions toward him and speaks.)*

LITTLE GRAY LADY. Love has worked its own sweet spell

On him. No soul could ever tell

Just how much good this night will do.

When first I came I was so blue.

Come, Stars, they need us in the sky,

So all of you must say good-bye.

*(The Stars then circle round the bed and each one drops on the coverlid a handful of gold stars. Then, followed by the Little Gray Lady, they go dancing off the stage, leaving the Moon Man at the window and Jelf standing at the head of the bed.)*

MR. MOON MAN (*proudly*). I'd say we did fine work  
to-night —

One child at least will do the right,  
And try to give some others joy;

(*Looks at Elizabeth Ann and smiles contentedly.*)

And never more will SHE annoy  
The Stars. I'm off to call the Sun —  
That fellow keeps me on the run!  
Oh, I have so enjoyed my call!  
Thanksgiving greetings to you all!

(*Waves his hand with a bright smile and disappears  
from the window.*)

ELIZABETH ANN. I'm very sleepy —

(*Rubs her eyes, lifts her head a bit higher, bends forward  
as though to look out of the window.*)

But I love

To think of them up there above  
The world —

(*Gestures upward toward the stars.*)

Just think now, I

Have playmates smiling in the sky.

(*Elizabeth Ann drops back among the pillows as though  
too sleepy to sit up any longer. Jelf softly waves his  
magic wand over her a few more times. Then he steals  
over and puts out her light that has burned all night. He  
walks carefully around the room as though he would make  
sure that everything was safe for the sleeping little girl to  
whom he has brought LOVE. He pauses for a few seconds,  
waving his magic wand to and fro, first over the room and  
the child, then toward the audience as though to include it  
also in his loving attentions. He makes his exit through  
the window in the direction taken by the Moon Man. The  
curtain slowly falls.*)

DECEMBER  
THE HOLLY WREATH





## CHARACTERS

*(In the order of their appearance)*

MOTHER RABBIT, who lives in Happy Forest.

FOUR LITTLE RABBITS, children of Mother Rabbit.

BABY RABBIT, the very tiniest rabbit of all.

JELF, the Love Elf.

ANNABELLE and ADRIENNE, twins about nine years old.

GIVE, the Spirit of Christmas.

THE GRAY MESSENGER, the Messenger of Santa Claus.

SWIFT, the Messenger of Happy Forest.

FIR TREE, a faithful servant at Christmas time.

CHRISTMAS CANDLE, the Guardian of the Love Lights.

THE CANDLE SISTERS, seven attendants of Christmas Candle.

MR. POP-CORN BOYS, seven lively brothers of Mr. Pop-Corn.

MISS CRANBERRY, always willing to make chains.

THE CRANBERRY MAIDENS, five attendants of Miss Cranberry.

GLEAM, a Tinsel Fairy.

TINSEL FAIRIES, five attendants of Gleam.

SANTA CLAUS, the Saint of Christmas.

JUMPING JACK, who tries to play a trick on Santa Claus.

JACK-IN-A-BOX, who helps Jumping Jack in his pranks.

MISS MISTLETOE } who help make Christmas cheer.  
MISS HOLLY }

*Place.* The Happy Forest.

*Time.* The day before Christmas.

Late afternoon of the day before Christmas.

## STORY OF THE PLAY

ADRIENNE and ANNABELLE, twins, have lost their father and their mother has to take in sewing in order to keep them and their baby brother.

On the afternoon of the day before Christmas, they go into Happy Forest, hoping to find some holly so that they can brighten their sad little home and make it seem more like holiday time. They search all about, but without success, and at last walk on into another strip of woods near by.

Jelf, the Love Elf of Happy Forest, lying hidden near the children, has heard every word they said to each other. When he is sure they are gone, he rushes out from his hiding-place and, calling up Santa Claus Land, tells Mrs. Santa what he has just discovered. She promises to send down the Gray Messenger, and, at the close of their conversation, the Christmas Spirit hurries on the scene. She is carrying her Mirror of Happiness which is clouded over because somebody, in the neighborhood of the Forest, is heavy-hearted. As she stands trying to read her dim glass, the Gray Messenger swoops down and speaks of things he noticed in passing the home of Adrienne and Annabelle. Then he hastens back to report to Santa Claus, and the Christmas Spirit, again looking into her mirror, is now able to catch a glimpse of the forlorn cottage and the sorrowing woman who lives there. Much grieved at the sight, Give starts to weep, but Jelf comforts her and summons Swift to lead her to the secret place where the workers of Happy Forest are holding council to see what can be done.

Left alone, Jelf decides to place Happy Forest under a love-spell. He does so, and presently the twins return, very tired and discouraged over their failure to find any holly. Strangely attracted by the changed appearance of Happy Forest, they sit down on a log to rest awhile before going home.

Soon Fir Tree comes walking in and places himself well in the foreground. He is followed by the Happy Forest Elves and Fairies, all in disguise, who trim the Fir Tree with candles, pop-corn, tinsel, and cranberry chains. Last of all Santa Claus appears to provide the needed toys.

When Fir Tree has been well decorated, the Spirit of

Christmas enters the Forest with her two maids, Holly and Mistletoe. After she has crowned Adrienne and Annabelle with Christmas wreaths, Give tells them that the beautiful tree they see is their own. At this, all of the players are filled with joy and join hands to dance round and round Fir Tree, while the curtain slowly falls.

### CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES OF PLAY

MOTHER RABBIT, the THREE BROTHER RABBITS and BABY RABBIT differ from each other in size only. All wear same costume.

*Costume:* Suits of white, woolly material made with shoes, mittens, and round, tight head-covering all attached. On top of hood place tall ears made of stiff white felt and lined with pale pink worsted. On back of suit fasten a large fluffy bunch of cotton for tail.

**JELF, THE LOVE ELF:** This character is the chief one in the play and should be the human expression of Love. Assign the part to a very small boy of blond coloring and merry ways.

*Costume:* Elfin suit of some bright yellow material, such as paper muslin, lining, brilliantine, silk, or any other cloth with sheen enough to give the effect of gold. Peaked cap with small gold tassel. Yellow or orange stockings with shoes made of same material as the suit. The toes of the shoes should end in a point, slightly turned up. A small gilt horn or flute hangs from a cord about his waist. In his hands he carries a short, slender wand. This can be made of wood or tightly rolled paper with gilt covering.

**ADRIENNE and ANNABELLE:** Rather serious children nine or ten years of age.

*Costumes:* Adrienne — Well-worn overcoat, cap, mittens and muffler.

Annabelle — Shabby winter coat, hood, small dark fur neckpiece and new red mittens.

**GIVE, THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT:** This character should ex-

press love, unselfishness, the giving impulse, and the beautiful tradition of the Christmas motto, "Peace on earth, good will toward men." For this reason great care must be used in choosing the actor for this part — the next in importance to that of Jelf. It may be taken by a girl of eleven or twelve, or even much older. She should be brunette in type and the possessor of a clear, pleasant, low-pitched, and very expressive voice.

*Costume:* Long, flowing, white garment caught in at the waist with bright scarlet cord. Cape of warm, bright red woolen, such as flannel, felt, etc. Wreath of poinsettias on her flowing hair, and in her hand a tall slender wand, tipped with a star. In her other hand she carries a round mirror.

**THE GRAY MESSENGER:** This is one of the four comedy parts of the play. It requires a large boy, slight in build and with a long serious face and twinkling eyes. The success of this character depends upon the actor's ability to handle a serio-comic rôle.

*Costume:* Wide, cloaklike gown of gray cloth such as paper muslin, lining, or firm, light-weight woolen material of some sort. Cut this garment after the model of a college gown, but have it slip over the head instead of opening down the front. Long, full, winglike sleeves to give effect of enormous wings. Heavy black cord about waist serves for belt, and at the same time carries an exceedingly large pencil which is fastened to one end. Close-fitting, peaked cap with wide frill about the face. The edge of this frill as well as lower border of gown and sleeves is cut in long narrow points that wave briskly to and fro with every vigorous movement of the Messenger's active body.

**SWIFT, THE MESSENGER OF HAPPY FOREST:** Select a tiny, slight child of blond coloring and light, graceful movements.

*Costume:* Dress of white tarlatan, mull, or other filmy material. Waist gathered in at neck and belt. Short, full skirt and wide sash. Gauzy wings on shoulders. Wreath of pink and white rosebuds about head.

**FIR TREE:** An older boy who is tall and slender.

*Costume:* Close-fitting suit of brown lining or paper muslin, hands and feet attached. He carries before him a light and well-branched evergreen tree reaching well above his head, extending down to floor between his feet and completely hiding his body, except at one point where he thrusts his face between the boughs.

**CHRISTMAS CANDLE and CANDLE SISTERS:** Eight girls of eight or nine, one of them taller than the others, who are of the same height.

*Costume:* Pink, green, white, and yellow cheesecloth, two dresses of each color. Narrow, straight, one-piece garment with shoes and stockings of same color as gown. Little round caps somewhat like cap of chef, but coming up to end in a peak where an oval piece of stiff yellow paper gives the illusion of candle flame.

The leader, **CHRISTMAS CANDLE** — white costume, carries a big red candle in a large candlestick. The **CANDLE SISTERS** come in with a tree candle in one hand and a holder in the other. These small candles should match the gowns in color.

**MR. POP-CORN and the POP-CORN BOYS:** Eight boys of seven or a little older. The success of this group will depend upon the amount of mischievousness they show in their work.

*Costume:* White cheesecloth, close-fitting suits covered with irregular ruffles of white crêpe tissue paper. Brown shoes and stockings and tight skull-caps of brown lining. These caps are trimmed with pop-corn chain, the bottom edge being finished off with loops that swing freely about the face as the Pop-Corn Boys go through their gay, frisky movements. Long strands of pop-corn chain serve as necklaces.

**MISS CRANBERRY and CRANBERRY MAIDENS:** Six small girls six or seven years of age. Choose girls of the same height for the Maidens, but Miss Cranberry can be both older and taller; in fact much older than the others.

*Costume:* Dresses of crimson crêpe tissue paper, made



with extremely full waists gathered in at neck and belt to give the roundness of a cranberry. Skirts made of very wide ruffles, graduated in length from belt to knee and laid one under the other to give circular effect, suggesting shape of cranberry. Red stockings and shoes corresponding to color of gowns, and long cranberry chains as necklaces. The Cranberry Maidens wear forehead bands of red velvet ribbon, while Miss Cranberry has a more elaborate head-piece made of rows of cranberries sewed firmly on foundation of cardboard covered with tissue paper matching the gown.

**GLEAM and the TINSEL FAIRIES:** Five girls of six or seven, as nearly the same size as possible. One taller and older girl for leader. All should try to make every movement both swift and sudden to carry out idea of flashing of tinsel.

*Costume:* Gowns of bright yellow tarlatan, worn over orange under-dresses. Close-fitted waists, very wide short skirts, full sashes and narrow hair-bands of stiff cardboard covered with gilt paper. Yellow shoes and stockings. Frocks profusely trimmed with loops and bands of rope tinsel. Each girl carries in her hands a long tinsel festoon which is afterward used in decorating the tree.

**SANTA CLAUS:** A large heavy-set boy with a round jolly face.

*Costume:* Suit of scarlet lining or paper muslin, trimmed in bands of eiderdown or other furry material. An enormous bag (of brown lining) bulging with toys, rests on his shoulder.

## PROPERTIES

**MASSES** of brush for stage setting. Five young trees or poles and branches for imitation ones. One tree should have little opening cut into it for a door. Small toy telephone receiver placed on a high stool concealed just behind the opening in trunk. Brown cloth to cover poles for



built-up trees, if real ones are not available. Big heavy log for center stage. Wand and gilded horn or flute for Jelf. Long slender wand tipped with large silver star for Christmas Spirit. Make this of stick of wood or tight roll of paper and cover with silver. Brown lining bag of toys for Santa Claus. Wide black belt of cord, braid, or ribbon and a huge lead pencil for Gray Messenger. Mistletoe and holly wreaths and a garland of each. Tall, light fir tree. Six long cranberry chains. One large candlestick with red Christmas candle in it. Seven candle-holders for tree. Seven Christmas candles (size for tree), two each of pink, yellow, and green, and one of white. Eight strands of popped corn for necklaces, and four longer ropes of pop-corn strung on heavy linen thread so that they may be used as harness. A large cardboard box with rope attached for Jack-in-the-Box to pull after him. Masses of cotton and sheet wadding for snow effects.

### SCENE PLOT

X	X	X
Tree	Masses of Shrubbery	Massed Shrubs
		Shrubs
O		X
Tree		Tree
O	Heavy log in center stage	H
Tree		Hillock
		H
		Smaller Mound

### STAGE DIRECTIONS

R. means right of stage; C., center of stage; L., left; F., flat or scene running across back of stage. Up stage, away from the footlights; down stage, near footlights.



## THE HOLLY WREATH

SCENE: *Happy Forest*, a beautiful place where no one is ever sad or bad. Several trees rising from clumps of shrubbery at F. Shrubby and ground covered with masses of snow. At L., two other trees form a natural gateway into the Forest. To R., more low bushes and several little hillocks also covered with drifted snow. At C., a large fallen log.

*Discovered: Mother Rabbit*, who slips out from behind bushes at L., and after hopping about until she is sure no one is looking, beckons with right paw. Three smaller rabbits appear, with a fourth, the tiniest of all, following along far behind them. As they reach F., Mother Rabbit takes the Baby Rabbit's paw and they stand watching as the others run races, with much excitement and furry handclapping. After the larger ones have matched each other, the mother leads the smallest rabbit forward to take his turn. The others beat him very easily, but he causes a great deal of fun as he falls down in his attempts to hurry, hops awkwardly along, and even stops his race to stoop down and pick up things that he sees on the ground.

Suddenly Mother Rabbit raises her head and listens intently, one paw lifted for silence. At the sound of footsteps she hastily gathers her family together and they disappear into a hole in the shrubbery at F.

Adrienne and Annabelle, hand in hand, enter Happy Forest. They search the whole place thoroughly, their manner becoming more and more anxious as they evidently do not find what they seek. At last they stop in their hunt and stand looking into each other's eyes, so filled with disappointment that they are unconscious of Jelf, who creeps out from behind the bushes at L., to hide himself behind the nearest tree.

ADRIENNE.

*(Shaking his head sadly at Annabelle.)*

I don't see any holly, Annabelle,  
And I have looked this whole place over well.  
Perhaps there's something else that we can get  
To decorate with (*straightening back*). We won't  
give up yet!

ANNABELLE (*sorrowfully*). No, there is nothing else.

What can we do

To cheer poor Mother? (*With second thought.*)

And there's Baby too!

I know the house would not look quite so bare  
If we could put up holly here and there.  
I did so want to hang a wreath up high  
In our front window, so folks passing by  
Would see it shining out behind the glass  
To wish them "Merry Christmas" as they pass.  
I feel sure, Brother, if we just do this  
To make it seem like old times, we'll not miss  
The presents and the pretty little tree  
And all the things to eat there used to be  
Before dear Father had to go away —

*(With a brave attempt at cheerfulness.)*

It's decorations that make Christmas Day!

ADRIENNE.

*(Looking at Annabelle wistfully.)*

I saw such heaps of holly at the store —

ANNABELLE.

*(Holding up a quick hand decidedly.)*

No, Mother cannot give us one cent more!  
We must not worry her — she is so sad —  
I do wish we knew how to make her glad!

ADRIENNE.

*(Shaking himself briskly as if to throw off his worries.)*

Well, cheer up, Annabelle! It seems to me  
That I saw holly in that wood there *(pointing)* —  
see?

We had our lunch and it is early yet —  
There must be holly somewhere we can get!

ANNABELLE *(somewhat cheered)*. No, we won't give  
up. Baby is so dear  
We just must celebrate for him this year,  
For he is older now.

ADRIENNE *(thoughtfully)*. Yes. Almost two —

ANNABELLE. Last year he was so small he hardly  
knew  
What Christmas meant —

ADRIENNE.

*(Interrupting enthusiastically.)*

Won't he shout with delight  
If we put holly up — or something bright?

*(As they cease speaking the two children leave stage at L. Jelf watches them until they are out of sight and then rushes out from his hiding-place. Running to a near-by tree, he opens a small door in the trunk and takes out a telephone receiver.)*

JELF.

*(In a very hurried manner.)*

Hello! *(A pause.)* Hello! Is this Santa Claus Land?

It is? Well, that's good! Now is Santa at hand? Out feeding his reindeer? Well, then, please will you

Just tell Mrs. Santa I think she will do?

*(After a moment of waiting.)*

Hello, Mrs. Santa! How are you to-day?

*(Another pause.)*

Oh, you will do nicely since Santa's away.

I wanted to tell him some twins came in here

Who have n't a prospect of Christmas this year.

*(Pause.)*

Of course it won't do. I knew that's what you'd say,

But never mind! Santa will think of a way,

And all of us here in the Forest, I'm sure,

Are ready to help him. *(Pause.)* Oh, yes, they are poor —

You'll send the Gray Messenger down to find out?

Good! I am so glad when I know he's about!

My love to you both and be sure we will try

To help. That is all for to-day, then, good-bye!

*(He replaces the receiver and closes the door just as the Christmas Spirit comes quickly on the scene, carrying her wand under one arm and holding a large hand-mirror into which she peeps anxiously from time to time. Jelf runs forward with hands outstretched in welcome.)*



JELF. Welcome! Will you tell me who you are?

I love your pretty wreath and shining star!

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS.

*(In a clear, reverent tone.)*

I am a spirit. Men have called me Give.

I am the lover of all those who live,

Down to the smallest child upon the earth.

*(Taking Jelf by the hand she leads him to the log and motions him to be seated.)*

Come, I will tell the story of my birth.

It is an old, old tale, but sweet and true,

Told often, but forever, ever new.

*(Holding wand upright in right hand and dropping mirror at left side. Give recites the following stanzas to the strains of "Holy Night" as it is played by piano or orchestra in the wings. She pauses between stanzas for musical prelude.)*

Long ago, in the glow

Of a camp-fire, burning low,

Weary shepherds were lying asleep

Where the mists and the shadows lay deep,

On a hillside forlorn,

Waiting the first Christmas morn.

On the night burst a light,

Making all that dark place bright!

Dazzled eyes saw a vast angel throng;

Startled ears caught that wonderful song,

"Christ the Saviour is born!"

That was the first Christmas Morn.

On that hill, lone and still,  
 Love from Heaven came down to fill  
 Earth and sky and the sad hearts of men;  
 All the world woke to singing, and then,  
 Out of that love I was born,  
 There on that first Christmas Morn.

Time has gone speeding on  
 Since that morning's glorious dawn,  
 Yet, through the nations I haste every year  
 When the glad season of Christmas draws near,  
 Touching the dull hearts of men  
 Swiftly to loving again.

**JELF.**

*(Rising and coming forward to say joyfully.)*

So you are Give! And yours the magic power  
 To touch the hearts of men until they flower  
 In loving thoughts and deeds.

*(Takes both her hands tenderly and stands looking lovingly into her eyes.)*

*(Remembering something, steps forward eagerly.)*

It seemed to me  
 That when you came in here so hastily,  
 Your heart was sad —

**GIVE.**

*(Thus recalled to her worries, raises mirror again to look into it with a returning anxiety.)*

My mirror clouds to-day.  
 That means some troubled soul has passed this  
 way

And I must help —

*(Bends head still lower to look again.)*

It clouds on this side *(pointing)* — So

That is the wisest way for me to go.

*(She starts off in the indicated direction, but stops short as the Gray Messenger swoops down into the Forest.)*

JELF.

*(Running forward in eager pleasure.)*

Oh, I'm so glad! — So glad to see you, Friend,

*(Turning to Give with shining happiness.)*

Now watch and you shall see our troubles end!

*(Taking Give's hand and drawing her up to face the Gray Messenger.)*

This is the Christmas Spirit. She came too

And wants so much to help us. Now with you

Here — My, oh!

*(Capers about gleefully.)*

I could dance and sing!

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT.

*(Turning to Jelf curiously.)*

Who is the Gray One? What help does he bring?

GRAY MESSENGER.

*(Stepping forward and making a low bow that sets all his long points waving.)*

I'm the Gray Messenger —

*(Suddenly flapping wings, he shouts.)*

Ho-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o!

All through the big world I go

And I peep here and there,

As I fly through the air.

And the boys and the girls never know,

*(Emphasizing the next with an impressive forefinger.)*

When they throw themselves down on the ground

To kick and scream, I AM AROUND

*(From the loose folds of his garment he picks up an enormous pencil, hanging from one end of the cord about his waist, and shakes it solemnly as he talks.)*

With my big pencil — See?

To write things for me —

And a black mark shows Just what I found.

*(Here he slowly turns up the bottom of one of his wide sleeves and makes a long heavy mark upon the white paper with which it is lined.)*

I'm the Gray Messenger —

*(He flaps wings as before.)*

Hoo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo!

Now, boys and girls, watch what you do.

*(He shakes finger gravely as he repeats slowly —)*

When you bump Baby's head,

And you won't go to bed,

And you won't eat what's set out for you,

When you leave off your "Thanks" and your  
"Please,"

And you don't mind your mother — and tease

The dog and the cat —

I see what you're at.

AND I WATCH YOU UNTIL YOU ARE THROUGH!

I'm the Gray Messenger *(points to himself impressively)* (—I

Go (*flapping wings as if flying*) just like a bat  
through the sky!

And where you may be,

It is easy for me

To go, since I know how to fly.

So when you WILL play with the hose

And spoil all your best Sunday clothes,

And Mother says, "Please

Watch out! Santa sees."

Now this is how Santa Claus knows.

I'm the Gray Messenger!

(*Crows as before.*)

Hee-ee-ee-ee-ee-ee!

You never can run off from me.

On sea and on land

I'm always on hand

As busy as busy can be!

Remember I carry right here

A record for all of the year

(*He lifts up the left sleeve and shows the inside paper lining which is completely covered with black marks set closely together.*)

On each Christmas Eve,

You had better believe

There are things for old Santa to hear.

(*Turning to Jelf.*)

A little while ago as on I flew

Trying to hurry on my way to you,

I found a cottage — oh, so poor and bare!

I know that you can do some good work there.

*(Points to L.)*

Now you will please excuse me, Jelf, because  
I must report this thing to Santa Claus.

*(He bows low with much flapping of wings and flutters out.)*

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT.

*(Turning to Jelf.)*

What little cottage did the Gray One mean?

*(Her eyes fall upon mirror and she exclaims in a relieved tone.)*

Ah, this is better! Now, things can be seen.

*(Studying glass more closely.)*

Here is a small room where a woman sews  
And other women come to try on clothes.

*(Bending lower over mirror.)*

And — yes, a boy and girl work willingly

To keep the cottage clean — and now I see! —

A baby boy, a two-year-old, lives there.

And oh, the pantry! it is almost bare,

Yet those brave children smile and smile each day

And try and try — SO HARD — to find a way

To make that sad home smile with Christmas  
cheer!

Oh, think of it! — and Christmas almost here

And they are trying still! —

*(She stops and covers her face with her left arm as if trying to hide the things she sees in her looking glass.)*

JELF.

*(Going up to Gire and taking her hand in a comforting way.)*

Please do not grieve.



With both of us to help I do believe  
That we will find a way quite soon, (*joyfully*) and  
then

The twins are coming back this way again.

*(Shaking his finger mysteriously as he says this with twinkling eyes.)*

*(A little period of silence follows, and then Jelf takes the hands of Give and shakes them playfully as he says impressively.)*

When Love and Give join hands,

*(Shaking both her hands again.)*

*That very day*

A lovely miracle is on the way.

*(He steps to center stage foreground, raises the little horn hanging at his side and blows seven long blasts. As the last note dies away, Swift, the Happy Forest Messenger, darts into the room to curtsy prettily and then drop on one knee before Jelf.)*

**JELF.**

*(Taking the hand of Swift and drawing her tenderly to her feet.)*

You have such willing little feet, my dear!

The moment that I need you, you are here.

*(Drawing her forward to face the Christmas Spirit.)*

This is the Christmas Spirit. Guide her well

To Wisdom Spring in Happy Forest Dell

Where she may meet our workers.

*(Swift takes hand of Give.)*

Every one

Is gathered there to see what can be done.

*(Swift, with a final curtsy, leads Christmas Spirit from*

*stage to R. Left alone, Jelf walks thoughtfully about the Forest, stopping now and then to pat the small rabbits who have come out from their hiding-places and now play tag in the foreground.)*

**JELF** (*musingly*). How wonderful it is! — Love's magic power!

*(Looks down at the golden wand in his hand as he speaks.)*

It smiles in starry skies, in every flower,  
In tender eyes — (*a pause*) — in every darkened  
place.

How it can lift the shadow from a face  
And leave a joy instead!

*(Pauses and turns the little wand round and round in his hands thoughtfully.)*

There seems to be  
No task too great for Love's bright wizardry.

*(Smiling to himself as a happy thought comes to his mind.)*

While they are all at council in the Dell  
I'll lay this Forest underneath Love's spell —

*(Capers about delightedly as he thinks about his plan.)*

Then all I need, when that is really done,  
Is just to watch things happen, one by one!

*(Standing in the center foreground, Jelf very solemnly and slowly extends the little magic wand, in turn, to the four points of the compass as he says clearly.)*

Oh, I am little Jelf,  
The happy little elf!

I came down to the earth from far above.  
No soul too sad or old,

No heart too hard or cold  
For me to warm it with my power of Love.  
I wave my wand and all the world grows bright  
And Hate is gone and Wrong is turned to Right!

*(As he speaks a yellow spot light suddenly flashes on the wand and follows it as it continues moving. Beautiful music swells softly through the Forest. The light slowly fades and then becomes warm and rosy. After a time a bird call sounds through the wood and is soon answered by another.)*

*(In delighted excitement.)*

A Love bird — Two of them in here to-day!  
Hurrah! Our miracle is on the way!

*(He dances joyously until voices are heard, when he hides hastily in the shrubbery. The voices sound more loudly and soon Adrienne and Annabelle enter from L. They walk slowly and wearily with heads hanging, and every movement showing their dejection. Seeing them coming the four young rabbits hop forward fearlessly and stand waiting with their paws held out in welcome. At the sound of the soft rustling they make, Annabelle raises her head, catches sight of them, and, forgetting her disappointment, runs forward in delight.)*

ANNABELLE.

*(Caressing the first rabbit she reaches.)*

Oh, see these darling rabbits sitting here  
And not afraid at all! My, this is queer!

*(She pats the next one enthusiastically and then starts as she hears the call of a bird.)*

Was that a bird?

*(Looking at Adrienne wonderingly.)*

Why, they should all be gone!  
What lovely glowing lights there are upon

The snow! It feels warm! — With that rosy look  
It's like a forest in a fairy book!

This is a pretty sight we must not miss.

*(Seating herself on the log and motioning Adrienne to a place at her side.)*

I never saw the wood look just like this  
Before in all my life! Why, just look there!  
I saw a fir tree move! — I do declare  
It is! — It's coming here! There, look at it!

*(Pointing an excited finger to rear stage.)*

And yet, I'm not afraid — no, not a bit!

*(As the children stare, wide-eyed with surprise, Fir Tree stalks gravely from rear to R. foreground where he stations himself with dignified ceremony and bows. Then he looks carefully all about him.)*

FIR TREE (*thoughtfully*). Well, so I'm here the very first of all!

But I was quite near when I got the call,  
And when they asked my help, of course, I flew!  
I always fly when there is work to do.

*(He nods head to emphasize this and then looks about him again.)*

And then I should be first — it seems to me —  
For what is Christmas time without a tree?

*(He throws back his head proudly and recites in a loud, rather boasting tone.)*

I am the good old Christmas tree —  
The whole world likes to look at me!  
My fruit is queer, but very dear,  
And no one knows what it will be.

When all the leaves are turned and gone,  
My stiff green needles stay right on,  
And through the snow they gleam and glow  
For flying flakes to cling upon.

And — think of it! Just overnight  
I bloom into a lovely sight  
With candle-beam and tinsel-gleam  
And swaying pop-corn chains of white.

And on my branches everywhere  
Are strange fruits swinging high in air;  
Toys, books and drums and sugar-plums  
And pretty dolls with curly hair.

All through the passing ages, we  
Have furnished every Christmas tree  
That Love might grow and Love-fruits grow.

*(Boastfully emphasizing each word with forefinger.)*

YOU have NO OTHER FRIEND LIKE ME!

*(Fir Tree ceases speaking as Christmas Candle and her attendants come into the Forest.)*

#### CHRISTMAS CANDLE.

*(Standing before tree and addressing her bearers.)*

I see the tree is here. *(Pointing.)* How bare it  
stands!

It seems to be just waiting for our hands.

*(Stepping to center stage and facing audience.)*

I am a Christmas Candle.

Ever since the Saviour's birth

I've kept a little gleam ashine  
To light the sad old earth.

Mine is a sweet, sweet labor  
For wherever I may be  
I keep the fires of Love alight  
Upon the Christmas tree!

*(Turning to her Maidens.)*

Come, put your candles on and we will go,  
For there are other waiting trees, you know.

*(The Candle Maidens quickly fasten holders, insert their candles and then stand aside as the Pop-Corn Boys gallop upon the scene from the R., their leader driving them with long pop-corn chains for harness. They circle about the stage several times and then stop with a great flourish.)*

POP-CORN LEADER. Whoa! Whoa, my boys! Whoa!  
Whoa! This is the tree!

We came to trim. Now, quick as you can be!  
Come, hang your chains so things will look more  
gay;

Then we must gallop off upon our way.

*(Pop-Corn Brothers hang chains under the direction of their leader who watches the work.)*

There, that is good. This one (*pointing*) is rather  
low.

One moment for a word and we will go.

*(With an air of great ceremony, waving hand toward others.)*

The Pop-Corn Brothers.



## POP-CORN BROTHERS.

*(All bowing together and then numbering in turn.)*

One, two, three,

Four, five, six, seven —

*(Eighth one, as he runs forward hurriedly after he finishes re-hanging the low festoon.)*

Do count me!

## POP-CORN LEADER.

Just full of fun.

*(All bow with smiling faces.)*

Yes, every one!

Because of good things we have done.

*(All point to themselves as Leader says word "We.")*

When days are dreary, we appear

And make a jolly Fourth all year!

We pop — *(First one jumps)* — and pop — *(Second one jumps.)*

And never stop. *(All jump at different times.)*

What could beat this for fun, my dear?

*(Leader asks this question of audience while the Pop-Corn Brothers look inquiringly at each other.)*

We laughed and laughed until — Hee! Hee!

We burst our little sides with glee.

Then every boy

Found out with joy,

His coat was white as white could be.

The game we all like best to play

Is this, "Be happy every day."

We worked our plan right in the pan  
And hopped and skipped and danced away.

*(The Brothers take partners among themselves and illustrate last line in humorous fashion.)*

We made a merry, noisy pop  
As if we never meant to stop;  
And when the lid that held us, slid,  
We bounced out with a jolly flop.

*(He turns to look at the decorated tree.)*

And now our labor here is done.  
Come, Boys, let's hurry — every one —  
For we must fly right off and try  
To find some more bare trees. Good-bye!

*(Leader marshals the Pop-Corn Brothers together and they gallop off, just a moment before Miss Cranberry and her Maidens enter in breathless haste.)*

MISS CRANBERRY.

*(Looking about her eagerly and then shaking her head in disappointment as her eyes fall on the decorated tree.)*

I see my cousin Pop-Corn has just gone,  
And I DID hope that, if we hurried on  
Our way here, we might catch him. It's too bad  
To miss him — he is such a jolly lad!  
Well, he has finished what he came to do,  
So let us hang our pretty garlands too.

*(She turns to call her attendants, but sees them dancing with their long festoons of berries, and hastens to join in the fun. At the close of the graceful dance, Miss Cranberry comes forward to C. stage and speaks, with her Maidens forming a bright group about her.)*

We are the cranberries, large and small.

Our cheeks are like the rose.  
In every land, on fir trees tall  
Our crimson gleams and glows.  
When tiny tapers flame and blow,  
Our Love lights flash and play  
Like fairy lanterns all aglow  
To bless your Christmas Day!

*(As the leader of the Cranberry Maidens ceases speaking, they run forward to hang their cranberry chains, and then circle several times about stage before they disappear to R., with one final whirl of their red draperies.)*

*(There is a pause, and then, to light staccato music, the Tinsel Fairies dart in from R., form a ring and skip about the tree as their leader speaks.)*

LEADER OF TINSEL FAIRIES. Flash! Glitter! Gleam!  
Shine!

*(As each name is called, a fairy makes a smiling curtsy.)*

With a pretty silver line  
Once we fished in Sunny Sea  
For the sunbeams, merrily  
Glinting as they catch the light —

*(Holding up her chain.)*

They will make your Christmas bright.

Tell me, did you ever know  
What makes little sunbeams glow  
As they cheer each dreary place  
Bringing smiles to every face?  
Listen!

*(Emphasizes with forefinger.)*

Sunbeams catch and hold  
Love thoughts turned to purest gold.

Flash! Glitter! Gleam! Shine!  
 Come and hang your tinsel line.  
 When the night comes we shall see  
 Just how cheery it will be,  
 Since we sparkled here and there,  
 Spreading sunshine everywhere.

*(As leader says last four lines, the fairies designated busily place the tinsel upon the tree.)*

*(When their work is finished, the Tinsel Fairies dance lightly about the stage, making many quick movements that serve to bring out the gleaming trimming of their dresses. Finally they flit off to R., with swift curtsies of farewell. Silence falls over the Forest.)*

*(Annabelle and Adrienne, who have been watching the scene in great astonishment, now rub their eyes as if to waken themselves, and start to rise from the log, but sink hastily back at the sound of a great tumult in the rear of stage. The noise grows louder and louder, with a mingling of stamping feet, ringing sleigh-bells, calls of "Whoa!" the thump of some one jumping to earth, and the jingling of harness. Then Santa Claus enters from R., much out of breath and carrying a huge bag of toys upon his right shoulder. He comes up to stand before Fir Tree, examining the work with broad smiles of approval.)*

#### SANTA CLAUS.

*(Coming to C. stage, where he lets down his pack and stretches his arms to rest them.)*

My! but those reindeer are frisky to-day!  
 Just bound and determined to go on their way!  
 Of course, though, the old fellows thought it was  
     queer  
 To start on their journey and have to stop here.

From years at their work they know we must go  
fast

Or midnight will catch us — not yet to the last  
Big chimney out there at the big world's far end  
(*gesturing*) —

So they always start off like a streak, and then tend  
Quite strictly to business until they are through —  
Which would be a good thing for all people to do!  
I pulled and I tugged and they DID stop at last,  
But not before THIS place was many miles past;  
And then we came back — but I must not delay  
With millions of chimneys to call me away!

*(He steps in front of Fir Tree and looks it over carefully,  
finally nodding in a satisfied way.)*

That 's the prettiest tree I have seen yet this year  
But it needs lots of toys and —

*(Stooping to seize bag from which he pours a heap of toys  
at the foot of the tree.)*

At last they are here.

*(He breaks off abruptly and turns quickly to discover that  
Jack-in-a-Box and Jumping Jack have entered from R.  
wings and are now creeping up behind him, the first Jack  
dragging his empty box behind him as he moves awk-  
wardly along in his hoop skirt.)*

*(After eyeing the two Jacks sternly for a moment.)*

I saw you boys jump out and start to run

*(Shaking his big forefinger accusingly at them with every  
word.)*

You two will never see a day — not one!

When you can pull off tricks on Santa Claus ,  
Or do a thing that he won't see, because

*(Suddenly setting a huge pair of glasses on his nose and staring fiercely at the two, with eyes that look many times as big as they really are.)*

I have my Magic Glasses and they show  
Me everything a Santa Claus should know.

*(At these words the two Jacks shrink back and then begin to hop up and down in a nervous fright.)*

JUMPING JACK.

*(Recovering himself first.)*

I — I — We — I — We did n't think of harm —

JACK-IN-A-BOX.

*(Gathering courage enough to stand still.)*

I — We jumped when the reindeer jerked your arm  
As we came tearing down the Milky Way!

JUMPING JACK. We did n't like it there a bit —

JACK-IN-A-BOX. And say!

We got afraid that we would lose the track!

Jack jumped from star to star —

JUMPING JACK.

*(Forgetting his fright and laughing as he remembers the chase after Santa's sleigh.)*

And on my back  
There he sat *(pointing to Jack)* with an awful  
frightened face  
And begged me not to drop him into space.

SANTA CLAUS.

*(Removing his glasses from his twinkling eyes.)*

I guess it will not spoil you much to learn  
That when you jumped it gave me quite a turn!



I'm glad you were not lost — Boys will be boys! —  
Now you will stick to me. — What was that noise?

*(Reindeer are heard stamping behind the scene.)*

My reindeer! They are restless! I must run.

A Merry Christmas Day to every one!

*(He waves his hand to audience, picks up his bag and goes hastily off to R., followed by the two bobbing Jacks who make a funny, stiff curtsy as they vanish.)*

*(Soft music sounds from the wings. Christmas Spirit enters from R., accompanied by Mistletoe and Holly. Give goes up to tree and stands looking at it admiringly.)*

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT. From what I see, the Workers  
must be through.

The tree is ready — and so handsome too!

And even Santa Claus has come and gone!

But one thing more and I must hurry on.

*(Turning to the others and stretching out her hands as she smiles sweetly.)*

My heart is happy now. My work this year

Is done — for I have traveled far and near,

And every home my mirror showed to me

Is brightened with the taper and the tree

Until *(with a wide gesture)* far over hill and vale and  
plain,

Warm hearts are waking to my glad refrain,

*(Very clearly and reverently.)*

“Peace upon earth and joy! Good will to men!

The birthday of our Lord has come again!”

*(Pointing to the twins sitting on the log, she speaks to her two maidens.)*

Go quickly now! The two wreaths that you bear

Are for the children sitting over there.

*(Mistletoe and Holly approach the twins and, taking their hands, gently draw them to their feet. Then they pass their holly garland about the two and pull them slowly forward until they stand before the Christmas Spirit.)*

*(Low, sweet music fills the Forest as Give takes the two wreaths handed to her and crowns Annabelle with holly and Adrienne with mistletoe. Then, taking a hand of each, Give leads them to the Fir Tree. Mistletoe and Holly follow to throw their long holly chains about the necks of the children.)*

**GIVE** *(lovingly)*. These pretty things you see are meant for you.

Your own unselfish love for others grew  
Into a miracle. — Here you may see  
Your own thoughts blossomed in this Christmas  
Tree!

**ANNABELLE**.

*(Joyfully after a moment of startled wonderment.)*

For us? — this tree? — these wreaths? — and  
every toy?

All these things really ours? Why, Baby Boy  
Will jump and shout with happiness! And, oh!  
I MUST dance or MY heart will BURST, I know!

**JELF**.

*(Skipping forward delightedly with outstretched hands.)*

Where could a finer place for dancing be  
Than round and round and round a — CHRISTMAS  
TREE?

*(He takes Annabelle's hand. The others form a ring, and as the music changes to a livelier rhythm, they go gayly about in a circle. The rosy glow of the Forest grows brighter and brighter, and the call of the Love Bird is heard again as the curtain slowly falls.)*

**JANUARY**  
**MOLLY'S NEW YEAR'S PARTY**



## CHARACTERS

*(In the order of their appearance)*

MOLLY, a pale, sickly child of eight.

MRS. BEMIS, mother of Molly.

JELF, the Love Elf.

CALENDAR BOY, who keeps the days in order.

THE LITTLE NEW YEAR, always a welcome guest.

SIX WISHES, attendants of the New Year.

SIX WHINES, who look on the dark side of things.

EIGHT SNICKERS, always on the trail of the Whines.

MISS VALENTINE, who assists the Love Elf in his work.

SIX HEARTS, attendants of Miss Valentine.

SAINT PATRICK DAY, who loves the Irish green.

THREE SHAMROCK BOYS, attendants of Saint Patrick.

APRIL FOOL, who watches for the First.

FOUR PRANKS, attendants of April Fool.

MISS EASTER, who brings back the Spring.

TWO LILY MAIDS, attendants of Miss Easter.

DECORATION DAY, who remembers the brave.

FLOWER MAIDS, four attendants of Decoration Day called  
Rose, Syringa, Iris, and Snowball.

MR. FOURTH OF JULY, who believes in a noise.

FOUR TORPEDO BOYS, attendants of Fourth of July.

FLAG-BEABER, attendant of Fourth of July.

VACATION DAYS, boy of six and girl of five.

TREE FAIRY, }  
WATER SPRITE, } who make vacation days happy.

SCHOOL CHILDREN, boy and girl of seven or eight.

FRUIT MAIDEN, the friend of the children.

MR. HALLOWE'EN, who comes every fall.

TWO JACK-O'-LANTERNS, }  
TWO BLACK CATS, } six attendants of Mr.  
WITCH and GHOST, } Hallowe'en.

MR. THANKSGIVING, who is always thankful.

ATTENDANTS OF THANKSGIVING, six small boys of seven.  
CHRISTMAS DAY, who knows the secret of happiness.

*Place.* In the sitting-room of Molly's home.

*Time.* The thirty-first of December.

Early in the evening of New Year's Eve.

### STORY OF THE PLAY

It is the last night of the old year. Molly Bemis and her mother are sitting before the grate where a fine, big wood-fire is burning. Molly, who has been ill for a long time, is restlessly turning the leaves of a large picture book lying in her lap.

Mrs. Bemis glances at the little clock, ticking away on the mantelpiece, and speaks of the coming of the New Year and the many blessings he is bringing to the big world. Molly, however, is tired of being sick and shut in from other children, and she answers her mother peevishly, saying that the New Year cannot bring anything pleasant for her. Her mother cuts her complaining short by suggesting that they throw some Fairy Fuel on the fire and see what will happen. The little girl agrees and they do so.

The flames turn to lovely tints of red, green, yellow, and violet, and then leap far up the chimney. There is a sudden crackling sound and Jelf, the Love Elf, bounces out into the room to wish them a Happy New Year. He laughs gayly at their surprised looks, and when he finds that they really believe in fairies, he tells them to throw on more fuel so that others will come. When the flames change color again, the Calendar Boy appears and introduces himself, telling joyfully about the many things his coming days are bringing for everybody in the great world. He speaks of the different holidays, calling them his "blossom days" because they flower out into so many unexpected pleasures.

As Molly has now become very much interested, he summons the "Blossom Days" and they come in, one by one,



to show the beautiful gifts they carry in their hands. Molly receives them gladly and calls them the guests at her New Year's party.

When the last of the holidays has come and gone, the delighted little girl turns to Jelf and the Calendar Boy to thank them both for the happiness they have given her. As she looks curiously at Jelf, he tells her who he is and then dances with glee over the outcome of the New Year's party, keeping up his funny capers until the curtain hides him from sight.

### CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

**MOLLY:** A small, pale girl who can assume a very peevish expression, and the slow, languid movements of a child who has been sick for a long time.

*Costume:* A dainty dressing-gown of soft white flannel or other material resembling wool. Bedroom slippers and white stockings.

**MRS. BEMIS:** This part may be taken by an older girl or a young girl who is tall and well formed. Must have an animated manner.

*Costume:* Long dress of blue or black, made with simple lines and worn with white collar and cuffs of ruffled material.

**JELF:** A small boy who is very lively and merry-looking. He must express happiness with every word and action. When especially pleased he shows it by capering about and throwing his small, peaked hat into the air.

*Costume:* Elfin suit of orange or yellow paper-muslin, alpaca or some other fabric resembling gold cloth. Shoes of the same material are made with turned-up toes and attached to bottom of close-fitting, ankle-length trousers. The cap is peaked and has a tassel or a tiny pompon in the top. A band of gilt cord or braid, with a tassel at each end, serves for a belt and holds the tiny bugle or flute that always hangs at Jelf's side. A short, slender wand completes

the costume. This may be made of tightly rolled paper with gilt covering.

**CALENDAR BOY:** This part may be taken by a plump, jolly-looking boy of eight or nine years of age. He should have a clear, pleasant speaking voice and a lively manner.

*Costume:* The conventional clown costume of white or pale buff or yellow. Choose some woolly material, as cotton flannel, and make a clown cap to match. Suit and cap may be finished off with bands of some bright-colored cloth or even paper. When the suit and hat are done, cover them with large calendar figures of bright red and yellow, interspersed with black. He carries a large calendar in his hand.

**LITTLE NEW YEAR:** A small boy or girl of five or six. Choose a blond type and, if possible, a child with short, golden curls. The face must be bright and attractive and all of the movements light and graceful.

*Costume:* Use as model the conventional picture of the New Year. Flesh-colored, tight-fitting suit, flesh-colored stockings or socks and tiny sandals. Pair of gauzy wings on his shoulders and wreath of ribbon or other artificial rosebuds about brow.

**WISHES:** Six children of uniform height. These may be as young as four years of age, and should look smaller than the New Year himself.

*Costume:* Fairy costume of gauze or tarlatan, with very short full skirts, slippers or sandals and stockings to match. Gauzy wing on each shoulder and silver band about brow with large silver star just over forehead. Hair may be short or flowing over shoulders. White can be chosen for these costumes, but the dresses will be made more effective if a soft rose color is used.

**WHINES:** Six rather tall, slender-faced children of six or seven. Must be sober-looking and, if possible, should have long, very dark hair. Train them to be as cross-acting as possible.

*Costume:* Long-waisted, narrow-skirted dresses of black

or dull-gray lining. Cut these down to ankles and do not allow any more material in skirts beyond the width necessary for running. Little round caps, made tailor-fashion, should extend well over ears and are of same dull-colored cloth as rest of outfit. Dampen hair enough so that it will hang in wisps about the faces of the Whines. This will add greatly to their forlorn appearance.

**SNICKERS:** Choose eight boys, chubby and happy-faced, who are larger and a little older than the children who take the parts of the Whines. For a more striking contrast, select boys with light hair and train them to smile and chuckle audibly during the whole time they are on the stage.

*Costume:* Loose clown suits of bright yellow or orange and clown cap of same color. Decorate entire costume with large figures of sun and his surrounding rays of light. Cut these from gilt paper and paste on well.

**MISS VALENTINE:** Tall girl of twelve or older, with dark hair flowing over shoulders.

*Costume:* Creamy material, as fine outing flannel. Dress made on slender lines and reaching to floor. Catch in at bosom by band of heavy cloth or paper, covered with hearts cut from red paper and pasted side by side all the way around. This will give the desired short-waisted effect. Gather in at neck and trim with corresponding band of much smaller hearts. Another band is used for crown, which has hearts of graduated size, with the largest one just above forehead. A long mantle, with a border of same trimming, is fastened to the shoulders at back. A bright scarlet silk cord, tied in front, serves for a belt.

**SIX HEARTS:** Bright red dresses of some very filmy material. Waist made tight and skirts short and full. Big red hearts, of stiff cardboard or paper muslin, are worn at front to cover child completely from neck to belt. Another heart, worn in similar fashion at back. Children chosen for these parts should be quite small and fair and, if possible, with short, curly hair, over which they wear wreaths of

vivid red rosebuds. Costumes are finished off at belt with large, perky bows of tarlatan.

**SAINT PATRICK DAY:** Fitted suit of St. Patrick green. Long narrow trousers and narrow coat, well gored and reaching below hips. Wide hat with turned-up brim. (An old soft hat, covered with green, may be used.) On front of brim, place a floating green plume, attached by cockade of Irish green ribbon. Costume completed by green neckerchief.

**THREE SHAMROCK BOYS:** Small boys dressed in suits similar to that of Saint Patrick Day, except that hats are decorated with broad band of green ribbon. They carry large green handkerchiefs in their hands.

**APRIL FOOL:** Suit of shining black lining, made as tight as possible without interfering with movements of character. Cut suit with hand and foot covering attached. Tight hood, of same cloth, well shaped to head and ending in long, curved peak with huge tassel hanging from tip. Entire costume covered with round yellow cut-outs of smiling faces made of paper or stiff muslin and sewed on firmly.

**FOUR PRANKS:** Suits resembling that of April Fool, but without the cut-outs for decoration. Instead, make one half of suit black, and the other half yellow. Make hood half black and half yellow.

**MISS EASTER:** Long, flowing gown of white, clinging material. Catch in at belt by girdle of long slender leaves of the Easter lily. Hair should fall loosely over shoulders. On brow, a wreath of Easter lilies. Finish off costume at neck with a garland of dainty lily-buds fastened to the band of the V-shaped neck opening.

**TWO LILY MAIDS:** Very small girls, dressed in white cheesecloth gowns. Make dresses full and trim with tiny lily-buds. Short mantles of same cloth fall from shoulder at back and reach to the bottom of the knee-length skirt. Each maid wears a wreath of lily-buds and carries a single full-blown lily in her hand.

**DECORATION DAY:** Grecian robe of some soft, white, cling-



ing stuff. Trim at neck opening, bottom of skirt, and lower edge of sleeves with broad bands of a delicate apple-green. Satin band of corresponding color for forehead. A long flowing mantle, fastened at back of shoulders in order to show the short, full sleeves. An armful of iris completes the costume.

**FLOWER MAIDS**, who attend Miss Decoration Day:  
**ROSE**: Dress of rose-pink cheesecloth, made with full waist gathered in at neck-band and finished off by a border of rosebuds. Skirt wide and knee-length. If desired, place same trimming about bottom of skirt and use same decorations for belt. Band of rose satin ribbon for head. Rose carries a little fancifully shaped basket filled with pink roses.

**SYRINGA**: White dress corresponding to that of Rose, but trimmed with artificial leaves and blossoms of the syringa. Orange satin ribbon for the head-band. Small, fancy basket filled with syringa blooms.

**SNOWBALL**: Very pale, green cheesecloth for dress. Trim with imitation foliage and tiny snowballs. Band of white satin ribbon for hair. Basket of artificial snowball blossoms made as nearly natural size as possible.

**IRIS**: Make gown of deep blue cheesecloth. For trimming use borders of artificial foliage resembling that of iris. Head-band of orange satin. Basket filled with small blue iris blooms.

**MR. FOURTH OF JULY**: Suit of dark gray lining trimmed at neck, sleeves, and waist with scarlet border of long slender points. Sleeves, trouser-legs, and hip-length coat made circular in shape and wired to stand out in shape of fire-crackers. Tall cylindrical cap of red with imitation fuse (of black) in top. Fuse ends in bright red tassel to give the appearance of flame. He wears about his neck many rope chains of varying length, with bunches of the different sized fire-crackers fastened at intervals in clusters of threes, fours, and fives.

**FOUR TORPEDO BOYS**: Suits of black lining with blouse, sleeves, and legs of trousers made wide enough to be as

nearly circular as possible, so that the boys seem to be dressed in torpedoes. Tight-fitting caps, circular in shape, complete the costume.

FLAG-BEARER: Soldier or Boy Scout suit of khaki with soldier cap. He bears a large flag over his shoulder and carries a bunch of smaller ones in his left hand.

VACATION DAYS: Boy of six, small for his age, dressed in blue rompers and shade hat. Carries a pail of sand in one hand.

Much smaller girl with buff rompers and sunbonnet to match. She carries a little shovel, swinging it in her hand as she walks.

TREE FAIRY: Leaf-green dress of exceedingly filmy cloth, as tulle. Full waist gathered in at neck and belt and finished off by border of leaves cut from heavy paper or cloth, and fastened together side by side with stems upward and the tips hanging loosely to form pointed edge. Very wide skirt with slashed bottoms. Loose sleeves of elbow-length, finished off in same way. Cap of leaves, cut larger than those for trimming dress, but fastened together in same manner so that stems form peak of hat and loose leaf-tips fall in pretty border about the face.

WATER SPIRIT: Costume of pale green or deep sea-blue. Cut like that of Tree Fairy, but finish off with bands of imitation coral where leaf borders are used. Band of coral about flowing hair. Make these bands by dyeing heavy white cord, cutting in jagged pieces and fastening to a narrow band of dress material. Or, coral-colored paper may be cut or twisted into shape of pieces of coral and pasted to the foundation band.

SCHOOL-CHILDREN: The usual fall outfit for starting school. Boy wears cap and girl her summer hat. Brown satchels hang over shoulder.

FRUIT MAIDEN: Flowing Grecian robe of apple-green with border of artificial apple-leaves about neck-opening, down front and around the bottom of skirt. Wreath of same leaves about brow. Basket of very red apples and ripe grapes in her hand.



**MR. HALLOWE'EN:** Elfin costume of gray, made of some cloth with bright luster. Cap, hand and foot covering that end in long points. Cover suit with grotesque faces cut from white, black and yellow and pasted thickly on. He should carry a lighted Jack-o'-Lantern. Gray mask with yellow trimmings.

**ATTENDANTS OF HALLOWE'EN: TWO CATS, TWO JACK-O'-LANTERN BOYS, WITCH, and GHOST:** These wear the conventional Hallowe'en costumes. All should wear masks of color corresponding to rest of outfit.

**MR. THANKSGIVING:** Pilgrim costume of conventional pattern. Should carry a Bible under his arm. Very sober face and manner.

**ATTENDANTS OF THANKSGIVING DAY:** White cook suits and caps. These will be rather humorous if children chosen are of carefully graduated height, from the first and largest down to the smallest one who brings up the rear.

**CHRISTMAS DAY:** White, flowing dress of cheesecloth with scarlet mantle or shoulder cape. Scarlet cord around waist with long, free ends terminating in large, scarlet tassels. Wreath of poinsettia blossoms on head. Should carry a long slender wand with silver covering and silver star at the tip.

*Note 1:* Materials for suggested costumes can be made largely of cheesecloth that has been dyed by using "Rit" or "Aladdin" soaps and adding coloring until desired shade is obtained.

*Note 2:* This little play can be made into a much larger thing by adding to the number of attendants who enter with each of the chief characters.

## PROPERTIES

### FOR SETTING:

Ruffled curtains and orange draperies for two windows. Library table, books and magazines. Cluster of carnations

in vase. Large cushioned easy-chair and smaller rocking-chair, floor lamp, footstools, rugs and couch and cushions. Grate and small white clock for mantel. Logs for fire.

**FOR CHARACTERS:**

Picture book and box of "Fairy Fuel" for Molly. ("Fairy Fuel" is sold in novelty section of large department stores.)

Short golden wand and small bugle or flute for Jelf.

Calendar with very large, brightly colored figures for Calendar Boy.

Long holly and evergreen garlands for New Year's reins.

Scarlet belt with long streamers of narrow ribbon, one for each of Miss Valentine's Six Hearts, who should be of three different heights so that they may come in by twos, with the two smallest Hearts leading.

Irish flag and three very large green handkerchiefs for St. Patrick Day and his Attendants.

A bit of shamrock for St. Patrick to give away.

Small cluster of roses and gay box of candy — Miss Valentine's gift to Molly.

Sheaf of Easter lilies for Miss Easter to carry in her arms.

Four small fancy baskets filled with roses, syringas, iris, and snowballs.

One large flag and cluster of small flags for Flag-Bearer.

Armful of large Roman candles for Fourth of July and boxes of torpedoes for the Torpedo Boys.

Long ribbon of pale green, to be used by Tree Fairy and Water Sprite.

Bucket of sand and toy spade for Vacation Days.

Two book-satchels with books, packages of lunch, pencils, rulers and pens. Basket heaped with very large rosy apples and ripe grapes, for Fruit Maiden.

Three Jack-o'-Lanterns for Mr. Hallowe'en and Jack-o'-Lantern Boys.

Bible for Mr. Thanksgiving and six big platters to hold

turkey (or easily recognized parts of turkey), mound of cranberry jelly, apples and oranges, pumpkin pie (or mince), potatoes, squash, etc., and dish of nuts and candy.

Large red stocking (child's) and armful of mistletoe and holly for Christmas Day.

## SCENE PLOT

X		X
Window		Window
	L.T.	
	Library Table	C C.
x E		O
x T		U
x A	O Cushioned Chair	C
x R		H
G	O Small Rocker	X
	F.L.	Door
	Floor Lamp	



## MOLLY'S NEW YEAR'S PARTY

SCENE: *The sitting-room of the Bemis home. At back are two windows with pretty ruffled curtains and silken draperies of orange. Between the windows, a library table with books and magazines and a pretty cluster of red and white carnations in a slender vase. To the left a grate with large cushioned easy-chair before it. Smaller rocking-chair at side of easy-chair. To the right center a door, leading out to other part of house. A couch, heaped high with cushions, is drawn slant-wise across right corner at back of room. Some smaller chairs, footstools and rugs here and there, give the scene an air of wealth and comfort.*

*Discovered: Molly, a small, pale, large-eyed child, seated among the cushions of the easy-chair, drawn up close before the grate where a fine wood-fire is burning. She is daintily and comfortably dressed, but shows the traces of a long illness. Her mother sits close at her side and looks thoughtfully into the flames. On the mantel a small white clock ticks busily on and on. A large floor lamp beautifully shaded, stands at a distance behind them.)*

MOTHER.

*(Putting more wood on the fire in the grate.)*

Is n't our fire lovely! One log more  
Will make it even brighter than before;  
And we must celebrate to-night, my dear,  
For twelve o'clock will end the good Old Year.

*(Glancing at clock on mantel.)*

How very fast the minutes hurry on!  
As if they wished the poor Old Year were gone.

Just think! While you are dreaming in your bed  
The little New Year will have come instead.  
A tiny, merry little Year, who brings  
New days and pleasures and so many things!

*(Up to this point Molly has been sitting turning the pages of the picture book in her lap. At her mother's last words, she looks up to say in a peevish, whining tone.)*

MOLLY. I don't want any mean Old Year to stay  
Nor any New Year — Let them keep away!  
The Old Year made me sick so terribly!  
What can the little New Year do for me  
When I must sit here in this poky chair

*(Throwing herself restlessly.)*

While other girls can run round everywhere?

MOTHER.

*(Smoothing Molly's hair in an attempt to comfort her.)*

Not all year, Molly, for the Doctor said,  
When you were well enough to leave your bed,  
That we would not have very long to wait  
Before you walked again — all strong and straight.  
And lately, every day brings strength to you —  
The good old Doctor's words are coming true!

MOLLY.

*(Still cross and peevish.)*

But I must sit and sit and never play!  
I want to get up now — now, right away!

MOTHER.

*(Still more cheerfully.)*

You must be patient, Dearie! See the fire!  
The happy little flames leap high and higher.



They must be hunting fairies in the flue!  
 Oh, now I know a fine thing we can do!  
 Quick! Quick! before the splendid blaze is gone!  
 Take this, and throw some Fairy Fuel on,  
 And if there should be fairies hiding near,  
 Perhaps the flames will coax them right down  
 here!

*(She hands a big square box to Molly, wheels her closer to the fire and stands watching the little girl as she shakes a bluish-green powder well over the topmost log. The flames leap up to burn with changing tints of red and blue and green and violet. Suddenly there is a sharp crackling sound as Jelf jumps from behind the fireplace and makes a low sweeping bow to the two astounded people who stare at him with wonder.)*

JELF (*gleefully*). Happy New Year!

MOLLY.

*(Rubbing her eyes to be sure she is awake.)*

DEAR ME!

MOTHER. How do you do?

JELF.

*(Bowing very politely.)*

Happy New Year again — to both of you!

MOTHER. Our fairy fire brought you here, no doubt —

JELF.

*(With a mysterious air.)*

Oh, no! The fairy folks are all about  
 This day of all days, when in every land,  
 The little New Year is so close at hand,

MOTHER.

*(With great delight.)*

I always did believe in fairies — so  
I'm very glad you came! Now I shall know  
There are such things — But what a great surprise  
To see a real one with your own, own eyes!

JELF.

*(In much astonishment.)*

Believe in fairies? Why, all wise folks do.  
Each fairy is a precious dream come true!  
You mortals never live one day or night  
That some small fairy does not help make bright!  
This very room — the whole world everywhere —  
Is full of fairies flitting here and there.

*(Molly has been staring at Jelf in a half-frightened way, but as he suddenly smiles at her and waves his tiny golden wand in her direction, she loses her fear and claps her hands joyously.)*

MOLLY. Oh, Fairy, you are just one merry smile!

*(Jelf bows elaborately with one hand over his heart and his eyes twinkling with glee.)*

MOLLY.

*(Stretching her hands toward Jelf in pleading way.)*

Please, won't you stay with us a little while?

JELF. My heart is just a smile too — for — Oh, my!  
The New Year's coming fast as he can fly,  
And when I think of what he brings to-night  
For all of us, I MUST dance with delight!

*(He capers about a bit before the charmed eyes of Molly, whose face gradually loses its peevish expression.)*

JELF.

*(Stopping a moment to hug himself rapturously.)*

I just can't wait to see that blessed boy!

*(Looking at Molly very closely for a short time.)*

Of course, you two are almost wild with joy?

*(Molly hangs her head, unable to meet his eyes.)*

MOTHER.

*(Coming to the rescue quickly.)*

Yes, we DID speak of what the year would bring.

But, my! we never dreamed of such a thing

As this!

JELF *(quickly)*. Since you like fairy folks so well,  
Throw on more magic powder. Work your spell,

*(Stops to look tenderly at Molly whose face is now interested and childlike.)*

For if your heart believes in them, my dear,  
Some other little fairies will appear.

*(Molly throws on more of the Fairy Fuel and they all wait in silent suspense as the flames take on their bright colors. Soon there is a sudden leap of the fire, a loud, crackling noise and a plump, jolly boy bounds out into view. He is smiling and merry-hearted, for the first thing he does is to dance about, throwing his tiny pointed cap into the air. At length he stops his capering, comes politely up to Molly and her Mother, to bow ceremoniously with a broad sweep of the cap in his hand.)*

CALENDAR BOY.

*(By way of introduction.)*

I'm just bubbling over with mischief and glee,  
As a Calendar Boy has a good right to be,

Who gives something away —

A clean, brand-new day —

A gift to the world every morning, you see!

*(Touching the calendar figures on his costume.)*

I have plenty to last me for all the next year,

A new day each morning for every one here

And my motto to try,

*(Emphasizing every word of motto with finger.)*

“Each day that goes by,

Give something away and fill life full of cheer.”

*(Turning to Jelf.)*

The Calendar — I'll introduce myself.

A Happy New Year! Well, how are you, Jelf?

**JELF.**

*(With pleased manner.)*

You came so soon!

**CALENDAR BOY** *(quickly)*. Oh, I was going past

To meet the New Year —

*(After a quick look at the clock.)*

He is coming fast!

And every time I stop to think about

What he is bringing, I could dance and shout

With joy!

*(Suddenly turning to Molly and her mother, to say earnestly.)*

Just think! A long year — all — all new!

How many things we'll have the time to do!

Twelve busy, happy months! — and, sakes alive!

*(Pointing joyfully to the figures with which his suit is covered.)*

So many days! Three hundred sixty-five!

*(More earnestly and impressively.)*

Our own to darken or make bright with love.  
 What gifts, of all those sent down from above,  
 Can be more precious than a spotless day,  
 Fresh from the hand of God — for work and play!  
 And every one that comes is snowy white  
 As paper, where each one of us can write  
 Whatever he may wish the most — and then  
 The darkness takes it back to God again.

JELF (*joyfully*). And, best of all, not one of us can  
 guess

What any day may bring! What happiness  
 Or loving gifts the flying minutes bear;  
 And, in the midst of work or pleasure, there —  
 All of a sudden, right before your eyes,  
 We find some hidden joy! — a sweet surprise  
 To brighten up the very darkest hours.

CALENDAR BOY.

*(Interrupting eagerly.)*

And did you know it? Some days are like flowers  
 And blossom out in many pretty things,  
 Just like the violets the Springtime brings.  
 The New Year's blossom-days —

MOLLY.

*(With round-eyed astonishment.)*

What? Blossom-days?  
 You fairies do speak in such funny ways!  
 I never heard of blossom-days before!

JELF.

*(Mischievously smiling.)*

Then, if you wish it, we will call some more  
Good fairies.

*(Turning to Molly to say gravely.)*

Watch them come and go  
And after this, one child at least, will know  
Just what the small New Year, who comes to-  
night,  
Has brought to make this sad old world grow  
bright.

MOLLY.

*(Wild with joy.)*

Oh, bring them! Quickly! Quickly!

*(Clasping her hands together in entreaty.)*

Please! Oh, please!

MOTHER.

*(Reminding gently.)*

Have patience, little daughter, do not tease —

JELF.

*(Smiling at Molly's earnestness.)*

Yes, I will bring them —

MOLLY.

*(Clapping her hands with joy.)*

Right here? — Every one?

Oh, oh, how jolly!

*(Turning to look at her mother.)*

My! Won't that be fun?

Oh, what a New Year's party that will be!



With "Blossom Days" that come to call on me!

*(She takes the box from Jelf and sprinkles more Fairy powder on the fire. There is silence as a warm light gradually fills the room. Molly sits in breathless waiting. Suddenly Jelf raises his tiny golden flute to his lips. He blows a long, clear note, followed by another and still another. As the last tone dies softly away, there is the patter of small dancing feet and the New Year enters driving six rosy Wishes by long holly and evergreen garlands.)*

NEW YEAR.

*(After he has handed his reins to Jelf, bows politely to audience and throws kisses to Molly and her mother.)*

Oh, I am the little New Year!

The whole world is glad I am here!

My looks quite deceive;

You would never believe

The many surprises I hide up my sleeve.

*(Pauses to wink in secret glee.)*

But there is one thing you may know —

At midnight the big world will glow

With joy that I bring,

And glad bells will ring:

"The Old Year is gone and the New Year is king!"

And here are some presents from me,

*(He looses three Wishes from his train and pushes them forward. They bow prettily as their names are told off in turn.)*

Health, Laughter, and Love, for these three

Can make work and play

A fine holiday —

*(Stops short, comes closer to Molly and says in a loud*

*stage whisper, shaking a plump forefinger at her with every word.)*

To-morrow a real one is coming your way!

*(Turns to Jelf and begins to gather up his reins.)*

And now I must hurry and go.

I've so far to travel, you know.

*(Facing Molly and her mother and speaking to them seriously.)*

I leave in your care

The days that I bear —

All yours to make what you will — stormy or fair.

*(As he ceases speaking, New Year separates the three Wishes from the others and draws them close to the little girl's chair, where they group themselves about her in loving fashion. He takes the large calendar and places it on Molly's lap. Then the little New Year turns to the right of stage, drawing in his long lines as if about to go, but stops in astonishment as the six Whines come dragging into the room. They step up to Molly and stand looking dolefully at the three Wishes and the pretty calendar lying before them.)*

FIRST WHINE.

*(In a cross, complaining voice.)*

I'm cold! I'm cold! It's such a freezing night!

SECOND WHINE.

*(Taking up cross tone of the first one.)*

Oh! Oh! My eyes hurt. That old fire's too bright.

*(Covers eyes.)*

THIRD WHINE.

*(Pointing to Molly angrily.)*

That girl can't play. I'm sorry that I came.

FOURTH WHINE.

*(Coming close to thrust her dismal face close to Molly's own.)*

She's pale. She's been in bed! Now what a shame!

*(Starts to cry.)*

*(She stops to look about in rage and stamp her feet in temper.)*

FIFTH WHINE.

*(Pointing a derisive finger at the three Wishes.)*

Just look at those three Wishes! Health! Dear me!

To talk of that is silly as can be.

SIXTH WHINE.

*(Interrupting to carry on the angry tirade as she glares at the poor little Wishes who hover so lovingly about the invalid.)*

And Love and Laughter! — to a child that's sick! —  
I'd send all such things flying good and quick!

*(There is a sound of suppressed giggling and the Snickers burst into the room and give a funny little dance, with much covering of smiles and slapping of knees, when laughter overwhelms them. They finish this and come to bow to Molly, after kneeling to the Wish Laughter, who extends her arms in delighted welcome. Soon they catch sight of the mournful Whines and run forward to chase and tickle and tease. The Whines hastily put one hand on each side of their faces, hold down the corners of their mouths, and, as soon as possible, escape from the stage, still pursued by the mischievous Snickers.)*

MOLLY.

*(Looking after them in wonderment.)*

What ugly whining things! Who can they be?

I'm very glad they could not stay with me!

NEW YEAR. Those are the Whines. With their cross,  
snarling ways

They do their best to spoil my brightest days.

MOLLY.

*(In a curious tone.)*

Why did they hold their mouths down on each  
side?

Did they have toothache?

*(Shaking her head as she answers her own question.)*

No. They would have cried —

JELF. All Whines do that, when Snickers come in  
sight.

With Snickers round, it always is a fight  
To keep their mouths from curving in a grin,  
For if the lips of any Whine begin  
To go up at the corners in a smile,  
The Snickers, who are watching all the while,  
Just grab them — before you could wink your  
eye —

And turn them into Snickers. So they try  
To keep their faces pulled down, long and sad,  
And run like lightning, if a Snicker Lad  
Comes near. I really pity them! I do!  
Poor, cross, complaining things! If they just knew  
How happy people feel who love to smile,  
Each one of them would start and run a mile  
To find a Snicker Lad to smile at quick,  
And turn to cheery folks *(stops to smile at Molly)*  
— and learn the trick

Of having merry days and good times too.

Who wants to wear a Whine's black frown? Do  
you?

MOLLY.

*(In a decided voice.)* .

No, I would rather have a pleasant look.'

I never read such things in any book!

You fairy folks ARE certainly quite queer

But — How I love you! You are all so dear!

*(She stops to smile about her.)*

NEW YEAR. It's getting very late and I must skip.

I'll take that sweet smile with me on my trip.

If you will always keep your lips up-curved,

I'll have one thing to help me cheer the world.

*(He waves a gay hand and skips out. No sooner is he gone than, to the sound of dreamy music, Miss Valentine enters, followed by Six Hearts, attached by long scarlet ribbons to her girdle.)*

MOLLY. How pretty!

*(Catching sight of the Cupids.)* .

Cunning things!

MISS VALENTINE. How are you all?

*(Turning to speak to Jelf.)*

You see we were just ready for your call.

My Hearts are here.

*(She passes her hand over the head of the nearest Cupid.)*

MOLLY *(enthusiastically)*. The darlings! Let them  
stay.

MISS VALENTINE. They help to celebrate the good  
Saint's day



In February. Each one does his part.

We search out every cold and selfish heart  
And charm it back to loving, with the spell  
Saint Valentine knows how to use so well.

We do our work, and, when we pass on by,  
A shower of love-notes comes — and how they fly  
All through the world! — and crimson roses glow,  
And candies shine in boxes, row on row.

MOLLY. And everybody loves to see your face!

MISS VALENTINE. Yes, people welcome us in every  
place

When February Fourteenth comes each year.

Now I will leave this tiny sweetheart here.

Remember, Molly dear, that while you live,

If you will try your loving best to give

To others, every passing day, for you

Will be Saint Valentine's, the whole year through.

*(She unties a little Cupid from her strand of hearts, places a bunch of roses and a box with decorated cover in its arms and leads it to Molly's chair, where it places the things in her lap and then nestles down close at her feet. Miss Valentine and her train go off stage after a charming curtsy.)*

*(There is the ripple of a merry laugh, the music changes to an Irish melody and Saint Patrick and his lads enter. The leader carries an Irish flag and the attendants, big green handkerchiefs. They go through a quaint Irish jig and then come to Molly's chair to bow elaborately.)*

LEADER.

*(With quaint Irish gestures.)*

Hi for Saint Patrick and ho for Saint Patrick,  
And all the world decked out in good, Irish green!



## MOLLY'S NEW YEAR'S PARTY 123

When winter is going and brooklets are flowing,  
And out on the hills the first grass blades are seen.

When gray skies grow lighter and dark days are  
brighter,

I bring you a smile and the first signs of spring,  
And feasting and laughter come following after.

*(Turning to Molly and waving flag playfully.)*

You will know me again by the color I bring.

*(He places the green flag and a bit of shamrock on the child's lap and the group bows itself out with much ceremonious waving of the big handkerchiefs.)*

MOLLY.

*(Waving her hands again and again until the visitors are gone.)*

I am so sorry that they had to go!

They were so jolly — and I loved them so!

JELF *(excitedly)*. Look! Quickly, Molly! Some one else is here!

MOLLY. Who can that be! Who is it? Oo-oo-oo!  
How queer!

*(April Fool Day and his Pranks break in on a run and gallop about briskly, chuckling and chucking the Wishes and the Cupid under the chin. They make Mrs. Bemis a comical bow and blow kisses to Molly in a funny, awkward way, constantly winking at each other as if they shared a big secret. While speaking they gesture humorously with the things in their hands.)*

APRIL FOOL.

*(Dropping on bended knee before Molly and then rising with mock ceremony, takes off his hat soberly and sweeps the ground with it, while his Pranks earnestly imitate*

*every motion as soon as he completes it. All maintain perfect silence.)*

*(April Fool finally speaks in a serio-comic, very deep tone.)*

I'm April Fool!

The day I rule

I bring my Pranks along.

When they come, too,

Folks find it true

That things go strangely wrong!

*(Stops to wink at the four Pranks who wink back and repeat solemnly.)*

Yes, things go strangely wrong! O-o-o-o-o-oh!

FIRST PRANK. The salt gets in the sugar bowl —

*(As First Prank says the above line he stirs the salt in the huge white sugar bowl he carries in his hand, and then lifts a large spoonful and puts it eagerly to his lips, with every appearance of trusting anticipation. He closes his mouth with enjoyment and then his expression quickly changes as he chokes, begins to hold his brow and makes a series of horrible faces. He suffers for a few seconds and then puts his head down on the shoulder of the next Prank, who pats him consolingly on the back for a moment, and then slyly drops a pocket-book down in front of him. Hearing the sound of something falling, the First Prank reaches quickly to pick it up, and the Second Prank whisks it away by the swift jerk of the string to which it is attached, at the same time chanting in a solemn tone.)*

SECOND PRANK. Don't find a pocket-book!

*(First Prank acts as if overcome with this new grief, and again lays his head down on the shoulder of Second Prank, who puts his arms about him in a mocking attempt to comfort him, at the same time winking at the other Pranks over his head.)*

THIRD PRANK.

*(Holding out opened box of candy to Fourth Prank who stands at his side.)*

If some one gives you candy —

*(He stops suddenly to put one hand over his mouth in order to hide a grin, for the Fourth Prank painstakingly picks out the largest, brownest chocolate cream and takes it from the box with a grand flourish. He attempts to bite off a big piece, but finds himself chewing one end of a long piece of cotton that he has stretched out to a fluffy string.)*

THIRD PRANK.

*(Continuing his speech as he impishly catches hold of the cotton the Fourth Prank holds between his teeth. He pulls it out still farther as he soberly advises his victim.)*

Do stop and take a look.

*(Again winks at audience as the Fourth Prank picks the cotton out of his mouth.)*

FOUR PRANKS.

*(Suddenly running up to April Fool and saying together as one of their number embraces him with droll fervor.)*

Dear April Fool,

We love your rule,

And when you come along

And bring us, too,

Folks find it true

That things go strangely wrong. O-o-o-o-o-oh!

THINGS GO SO STRANGELY WRONG!

APRIL FOOL.

*(Nodding his head with a great air of mystery.)*

The salt gets in the sugar bowl!

Don't find a pocket-book.

If some one gives you candy — O-o-o-o-o-oh!  
Do stop and take a look!

*(Four Pranks form a circle about April Fool and dance round and round as they hear the first strains of "Turkey in the Straw." All at once the circle is broken by two who unclasp hands, leaving a line just behind April Fool. The two Pranks on each end go forward and lead in pulling April Fool from the stage. As they go, all dance with big, leaping steps, much kicking of heels and bending of knees as the feet are raised. At the moment of departure, they stop to sweep the ground in an exaggerated bow, keeping up their winking to the last.)*

MOLLY. Those funny things! Oh, can't we call them back?

JELF. No, they are far off on their homeward track.

MOLLY.

*(Holding up her finger as music changes.)*

Oh, listen! Some one else is coming here.

*(Miss Easter comes in with sheaf of lilies in her arms. With her are two little girls, each carrying a single blossom.)*

MISS EASTER. A Happy Easter in the bright New Year!

MOLLY.

*(As Miss Easter detaches a beautiful lily from her sheath and hands it to her.)*

For me, Miss Easter? What a lovely thing!

Why, I could close my eyes and think it's spring!

MISS EASTER. Fill every day with kindness as it flies  
And spring will blossom like a sweet surprise,  
And I shall come and greet you suddenly  
Before you know it's even time for me.

*(Turning to the audience, she recites slowly to subdued strains of music.)*

When the world wakes from its sleeping  
 And the birds come back to sing,  
 And the first brave sunbeams creeping,  
 Cast their gold on everything;  
 When the forest buds are swinging  
 And the gray skies turn to blue,  
 You will hear my joy-bells ringing,  
 "Wake, the world is born anew!"  
 When the moist spring winds are blowing fragrance  
     from the woodland's heart,  
 And the sunshine with its glowing, coaxes folded  
     leaves apart.  
 When the soft spring air is bringing lilies' fragrant  
     love to you,  
 I will set my carols ringing, "Wake, the world is  
     born anew!"

*(She turns to Molly to smile tenderly and say.)*

Good-bye, my dear. You'll see me soon again —  
 And you will surely run to meet me then.

*(Miss Easter and her maidens drop a pretty curtsy and go off stage as the music changes to a patriotic strain, and Decoration Day comes in with her arms full of iris. Her four flower-bearers carry small fancifully-shaped baskets, filled with roses, syringas, masses of snowball, while a boy with a beautiful cluster of flags, brings up the rear. They form a pretty group with Miss Decoration Day in the center and stand immovable until the music ceases. Then the Leader holds out her hands toward audience and speaks.)*



DECORATION DAY. I bring the blooms of the spring-  
tide hours,

The gifts of earth and the sun and showers,  
The Nation's meed of her fairest flowers  
To honor the sleeping brave.

Syringas gleam, as their leaves unfold;  
The roses open their hearts of gold;  
And iris blossoms their rainbows hold,  
To shine on an honored grave.

*(Flag-Bearer steps forward and speaker touches colors in  
flags caressingly as she speaks.)*

The red, for the brave deeds nobly done,  
The white, for a purpose purely won,  
The blue, for our true sons, every one,  
Shall shine where our banners wave.

*(As speaker ceases, the music becomes stronger and changes to a triumphant playing of the "Star-Spangled Banner." During the entire time the first verse is given, the group stands motionless, but at the completion of the last strain, the Flag-Bearer steps forward to place one of his smaller flags in Molly's hand. At this point there is a succession of loud, popping noises behind the scenes, and soon Fourth of July and his four Torpedo Boys come in from R. Fourth of July stalks proudly along with his arms full of large Roman candles. About his neck are many rope necklaces of graduated length, with bunches of the various sized fire-crackers fastened by twos, threes, and fours, until he looks as if he might be wearing a fire-cracker breastplate. At sight of flag he salutes promptly, while the Torpedo Boys do the same, completing the action by springing high into the air and coming down flat-footed in order to make a sharp, sudden noise rather like*



*the sound of a torpedo. They have boxes of torpedoes in their hands, and, while Fourth of July is speaking, they punctuate his recitation by discharging torpedoes at chosen places, making funny gestures in between.)*

FOURTH OF JULY. A Happy New Year! — Well, just see who is here!

*(Running up to Jelf to seize his hand and shake it vigorously.)*

JELF. You are the same old noisy boy — that's clear!

FOURTH OF JULY. Of course. My work is just to make a noise.

That's why I'm dear to little girls and boys.

There's always heaps of fun when I'm around.

How would you like a Fourth without a sound?

*(Emphasizing last question with shake of forefinger.)*

*(Turning to audience, he makes the following speech which the Four Torpedo Boys illustrate by exploding their torpedoes at fitting places. The Flag-Bearer waves his banners during the last verse.)*

“Boom!” go the cannons,

“Bang!” goes the gun,

“Pop!” go the crackers,

Adding to the fun.

“Crack!” say torpedoes,

Big and fat and black.

“Whizz!” hiss the chasers

In their crooked track.

Big banners floating,

What a jolly noise

When the Fourth comes calling  
On the girls and boys!

*(Music changes to "Dixie" and the Fourth and his Attendants whirl about, salute sharply, and march off stage in brisk, military fashion, after the last of the Torpedo Boys has placed his box of torpedoes on Molly's lap.)*

*(There is a slight pause as the last notes of the stirring air die away. Then the music changes to a low, dreamy six-pulse rhythm, and two Vacation Days appear, hand in hand. As they enter slowly, the Tree Fairy and Water Sprite hover lovingly about them in a dainty weaving dance, drawing the two forward by a long pale-green ribbon which has been passed around the waists of the children.)*

#### VACATION DAYS.

*(Coming forward to bow smilingly at Molly.)*

GIRL. Oh, we are glad Vacation Days!

Beside the sunny sea,

Where skies are blue

And waves are, too,

We frolic merrily.

BOY. We build our castles on the sand,

Go wading when we please,

And in the wood —

*(Pauses to hug himself and smack lips rapturously.)*

GIRL and BOY (together). Oh, my! how good!

That lunch beneath the trees!

*(They kiss hands to Molly and skip happily away, attended by the hovering fairies. Music continues and the two School-Children walk briskly on the scene, with the Fruit Maiden bringing up the rear.)*

SCHOOL-GIRL.

*(Taking things from little satchel at her side and displaying them as she speaks.)*

I have my pencil and my books and all my drawing things;

Come, Brother, we must hurry on before the school-bell rings.

SCHOOL-BOY.

*(Taking her hand and then suddenly examining his own satchel.)*

Let's see. Now, here's my pen and lunch, my books — Yes, there's my rule.

All ready. We must really go — it's almost time for school.

*(Both speaking.)*

The holidays are lots of fun. We love vacation!  
Then

It really is quite pleasant to have school-days come again —

To get your bag and dust the books that help you read and spell.

FRUIT MAIDEN.

*(Stepping up to children and offering an apple from her basket of ripe fruit.)*

And here's an apple for recess, to start the year out well.

Now, children, we must really skip — but, Molly, do remember!

The jolly school-days coming straight to you with next September.

*(She leans over Molly's chair and looks into her face as*

*she slowly says the last line. Then she leaves another rosy apple in the little girl's lap and follows the hurrying children from the scene. All stop to wave hastily just before they vanish from sight.)*

*(There is a sound of merriment, groaning and cat-calls, and Mr. Hallowe'en comes into view, followed closely by two black cats, a ghost, a witch, and two Jack-o'-Lantern boys. At sight of them, Molly claps her hands gleefully.)*

MOLLY. Oh, you don't need to tell your name — I know

That you are Hallowe'en, and how you go  
And climb up to folks' windows and take peeps  
And moan until you give us all the creeps!

*(She stops to shiver with enjoyment.)*

HALLOWE'EN.

*(Slapping his sides with glee.)*

Ha! Ha! Miss, you have heard of me before,  
So what's the use of saying any more?  
But this —

*(He stoops over Molly to say in a loud stage whisper.)*

A small bird told me, little one,  
That next year you could join in all the fun.

*(Presenting her with one of the black cats.)*

Come, Glossy, you stay here to tell her when  
It's time for me to call on her again.

*(He slaps the little girl playfully on the back, laughs heartily, and slowly leaves the stage, chuckling and winking until he has passed off to R.)*

*(Enter Mr. Thanksgiving with his Bible under his arm. He is attended by six small boys who carry on platters the various things that go to make up a typical Thanksgiving dinner.)*

MOLLY.

*(In excited welcome.)*

And I know who YOU are! Indeed, I do!

Thanksgiving Day! A bright New Year to you!

THANKSGIVING DAY.

*(In a sober manner.)*

All men know me. Each year I come to tell  
The thing that none of us can learn too well.

Long, long before our banner was unfurled,  
Your Pilgrim Fathers gave me to the world.

In cold, unfriendly lands, they did not fear  
To count their mercies with the closing year.

"Be thankful!" we can hear them gravely say,

"Be thankful for the things that bless each day."

*(He motions to attendants who step forward.)*

TURKEY-BEARER. Be thankful for the turkey —

PIE-BEARER. And the pie —

FRUIT-BEARER. The apples and the oranges heaped  
up high —

JELLY-BEARER. The glowing jelly — cranberry!  
*(Smacks lips.)* Yum! yum!

VEGETABLE-BEARER. Potatoes and the squash and  
peas that come  
All piping hot.

DESSERT-BEARER. And nuts and candy too!

*(All speak together.)*

Just think! — So many things! — And all for you!

*(Pointing at audience suddenly with forefingers.)*

MOLLY (*contritely*). I am so blessed with all the things I need!

Oh, I will be so thankful! —

(*Clasping her hands together earnestly.*)

Yes, indeed!

THANKSGIVING DAY. Good! Very good! for thankful folks like you

Are sure to help make others thankful too.

(*He turns to go but sees Christmas Day entering, and steps hastily to one side, carefully drawing his attendants out of the way.*)

(*Christmas Day comes in slowly to the strains of "Holy Night."* She carries an armful of mistletoe and holly and has an empty red stocking in her other hand. She comes up to Molly's chair, smiles lovingly upon her for a moment and then stoops to kiss her forehead.)

MOLLY.

(*Throwing her arms about the neck of Christmas Day in a sudden transport of joy.*)

You dear, delightful Sweet — to come in here!

I love you! — love you!

CHRISTMAS DAY.

(*Tenderly as she lays her hand on Molly's head.*)

And I love you, dear!

(*Smiling at the little girl mischievously.*)

And since you seem to know me very well

I will not say the things I came to tell.

Instead I'll ask a riddle. Tell me, do,

Why did I bring this funny gift to you?

(*She smiles again and gives Molly the empty stocking.*)



MOLLY.

*(Clapping her hands in her glee.)*

That's easy. You will soon be gone again  
But you will come back, Christmas dear, and then  
When it is nearly time for you — some day,  
I'll get this stocking that I put away  
On New Year's Eve — so long — so long ago! —  
And fill it for some poor, sad child I know.

*(At the last words and before Christmas Day can make a reply, Jelf suddenly leaps out to center of stage and begins to dance madly, throwing his little cap wildly toward the roof, while Molly stares in astonishment.)*

MOLLY.

*(In awe-struck voice as Jelf grows more quiet.)*

Please, Little Fairy, tell me — if you may —  
Why do you dance and dance that wild, glad way?

*(Stopping to look at him more closely as he slowly approaches her chair.)*

You brought me all these lovely guests who came  
To make my party — Please —

*(Stretching out her arms imploringly.)*

Oh, what's your name?

*(Jelf has come forward until he stands directly in front of Molly. He stretches out his tiny golden wand and, as beautiful colored lights play brightly over it, he recites in a loving manner.)*

JELF. Oh, I am little Jelf,

The happy little elf!

I came down to the earth from far above.

No heart too hard or cold,

No soul too sad or old

For me to warm it with my power of Love.  
I wave my wand and all the world grows bright  
And Hate is gone and Wrong is turned to Right.

*(At last line Molly stretches out her arms to him just as the curtain slowly falls. He resumes his dance and continues until he is hidden from sight.)*

FEBRUARY  
MR. FEBRUARY THAW



## CHARACTERS

MIKE, sturdy boy of eleven or twelve.

SLIVERS, thin boy of ten.

MR. FEBRUARY THAW, boy of ten.

ICICLES, a slender boy of eleven and two little boys of seven who tag him everywhere.

GEORGE WASHINGTON, dignified boy of twelve.

MARTHA WASHINGTON, plump little girl of nine or ten.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, thin, tall boy of thirteen.

SAINT VALENTINE, fat boy of ten.

FLAG FAIRIES, nine tiny girls of eight.

CUPIDS, six small girls of six or seven.

*Time.* Early in February.

*Place.* Garret room occupied by Mike and Slivers.

## STORY OF THE PLAY

MIKE and SLIVERS are two street urchins who are orphans and have been pals for several years. They live together in an old garret room in a downtown building. On Lincoln's Birthday they return home, both damp and cold from work on the street. Slivers, the younger boy, is much discouraged. Mike scolds him because he has not sold all his papers; tells him he should have worked them off. The little boy replies that it would not have been honest and they quarrel. Jelf, Happyland's Love Elf, overhears them and steps in. Through his magic he summons Lincoln, Saint Valentine, and George and Martha Washington to help him teach the boys the lesson they need.

## CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

MIKE and SLIVERS: Suits ragged; old caps and coats.

FEBRUARY THAW: Grayish white garment covering him completely, decorated around neck and sleeves and cap

with rows of imitation icicles cut from white paper-muslin in different lengths, close-fitting cap around face. Carry long icicle cane made out of a willow bough, tapering to a point and painted white.

ICICLES: Same costumes as February Thaw, without cane, and carrying small icicles.

GEORGE and MARTHA WASHINGTON: Usual colonial costumes.

SAINT VALENTINE: Woolly, white costume made like rompers, plastered with red hearts and Cupids. Carries bow and arrow. Peaked cap, band with red hearts.

FLAG FAIRIES: Three red, three white, and three blue garments. Use white stars on blue ground. Carry small flags.

CUPIDS: Sheer white material, short full skirts, wings on shoulders, silver or gold sash, hair in curls, gilt bands with Cupids on front. Should carry quivers or bow and arrows.



## 'MR. FEBRUARY THAW

SCENE: *Poorly furnished attic or storeroom. Bunk in one corner that is used by Mike and Slivers for their bed. Small, rickety table on which stand a few cracked dishes and a smoky lamp. Two battered kitchen chairs. On one stands a wash-basin and by its side an old rusty pail. Over the back of chair hangs a tattered bath-towel. Room looks as untidy as one would expect of a place occupied only at night by two street boys. Rags have been stuffed around the window to keep out the cold north wind. When curtain rises, from off stage comes sound of rushing wind rattling shutters or windows. Use bellows or some contrivance to get the effect of wind racing about a rickety building. The curtain rises.*

*Door opens suddenly and in tumble the Icicles, as though blown from the eaves of the building. The larger Icicle is always the speaker — the little ones simply clinging close to him.*

ICICLE (*shivering*). Whew! Whew! When I fell  
down

I almost broke my crown!

*(Feels his head, rubbing it as though to make sure it is n't cracked.)*

Oh! that hard icy ground —

*(Rubs head again.)*

But, its big, snowy mound

Just saved my head. I am

As frisky as a lamb.

*(Begins to hop around.)*

The North Wind blew us in —

Because we were so thin!

*(The Icicles strut around the room as though looking for a good place to attach themselves. Go near the window.*

*Sound of running water is heard, made by some one off stage pouring water slowly from one receptacle to another. Icicles stop suddenly, listen, and then look around as though frightened.)*

ICICLE. The North Wind blew us in

Because we are so thin.

I'm really glad of that,

For if we had been fat

We'd had a horrid fall —

And nothing left at all.

*(Shivers, and shakes his shoulders.)*

*(Sighing)* It's cold here in THIS room.

Here comes our awful doom.

I think that North Wind saw

Old February Thaw.

FEBRUARY THAW.

*(Enters right stage. Carries bucket of water and dipper. Raises a dipper of water and lets it pour slowly back into the pail. Laughs noisily.)*

*(Boastfully.)* Your little day is done

I saw the big warm sun

*(Icicles groan.)*

Push out his smiling face,

So you must leave *this* place.

Now melt yourself away!

ICICLE.

*(Wrings his hands mournfully.)*

A pretty howdy-do!

If what you say is true

We have no place to go,

If you melt all the snow.

*(Moans and groans.)*

Oh! how I wish that I  
Would never have to die!

*(Big and little Icicles strike attitudes of despair, walk down the room and back again, then sadly over to the window to keep cool.)*

FEBRUARY THAW *(importantly)*. But now, you must  
go tell

Your icy friends farewell!  
For I am after them,  
And the most precious gem  
Can't save a one in town.  
Soon they will trickle down  
Until they melt apart.  
If I were you I'd start.

*(February Thaw raises another dipper of water, lets it run down into his bucket, and then starts over toward the Icicles as though to melt them. They give a moaning sound as though heart-broken and then vanish, right stage.)*

FEBRUARY THAW *(boastfully)*. I tell you when I try  
I make icicles fly!

Trickle! Trickle! Trickle!

*(Pretends to weep in mock grief.)*

Poor little wet icicle!

*(Laughs noisily and vanishes left stage.)*

*(Enter right stage Mike and Slivers. Mike carries an empty paper sack while Slivers still has some papers in the bottom of the sack slung over his shoulder. Mike throws his sack down in a corner of the room.)*

MIKE. My papers are all sold,  
The new — and, yes — the old.

I'm rid of every one,  
And I had lots of fun  
Selling the old ones too —  
As if they all were new.

*(Mike walks over and snatches the sack from Slivers's shoulder, and looks into it.)*

That's what you ought to do.

SLIVERS.

*(With sorrow in his voice.)*

You know that is n't square.  
I don't see how you dare  
To sell old stuff for new  
When you know it's not true.

MIKE *(crossly)*. You need not try to preach.

Nor think that you can teach  
*Me* anything, you goose!  
Be honest? What's the use?

*(Mike walks angrily around the room, and Slivers looks frightened at the storm he has caused. He throws himself down on the bunk in the corner with his face toward the wall. Flute is heard playing just outside the window. Before the boys recover from their surprise at the unaccustomed sound, the door opens and in steps Jelf, the Happy Tribe's Love Elf.)*

JELF *(bowing low)*. Good-evening! Mike and Slim,  
Your light in here seemed dim  
To me, as I passed by,  
And so I thought I'd try  
To see what I could do  
To brighten it for you.

*(Room grows brighter as Jelf waves his magic wand to*

*and fro. Slivers raises himself slowly and sits with his back to the wall, his eyes fastened eagerly on Jelf.)*

MIKE.

*(Walks over toward Jelf.)*

What are you doing here?

You certainly are queer —

I can't quite make you out.

Did you come down the spout?

JELF.

*(Tossing his head happily.)*

Oh, I am little Jelf,

The happy little elf.

I came down to the earth from far above.

No soul too sad or old,

No heart too hard or cold

For me to warm it with my power of Love.

I wave my wand and all the world grows bright,

And Hate is gone and Wrong is turned to Right!

*(Jelf walks over toward Slivers.)*

I saw your light was dim

And heard you talk to him.

Some others, too, my boy,

Were near and found great joy

That you could bravely say

The things you did to-day.

*(Turns toward Mike.)*

You think there cannot be

Real joy in honesty?

Now I shall try to make

You see your big mistake.

*(Jelf waves his arms. Mike and Slivers steal over nearer*

*to the door, when Jelf blows on his flute three times. He then touches his fingers to his lips as though to keep the boys quiet.)*

Now, if you boys stand still  
I feel sure there will  
Blossom in this room  
Things to change its gloom;  
Things so sweet and true —  
Lovely things for you.

*(Noise is heard from off stage as though some one were at the door.)*

*(Enter Abraham Lincoln.)*

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

*(Looks about sorrowfully, for he knows this is a place of poverty.)*

I wonder, boys, if you have heard  
This fact, that's very true,  
That I was once a little boy  
So poor — yes, poor — like you?  
My home was such a humble one,  
I had to work each day,  
And by the flickering firelight  
I studied hours away,  
Because I wanted to be wise,  
And learn just all I could.  
I thought about the words I read  
While I was chopping wood.  
And when I grew up things came out  
Much better than I planned,  
And one glad day they called to me  
To lead our troubled land.



So, you can see, that more than fields, and ships,  
And mines, and gold  
The small boys of our country are her treasure —  
You may hold  
Her happiness and life within your  
Hands some future day,  
When you, too, are grown up, and childish  
Years are passed away.  
So think of me in all your toil,  
I had to struggle too —  
For what a little boy did once  
Another boy can do.  
Try to be honest, loyal, kind,  
And shape the man you'd be,  
A son to love your country's flag  
And guard her liberty!

*(Lincoln takes his place near foot of the bunk. Bright, joyous music is heard from off stage. Enter Saint Valentine followed by his Cupids. After their dance is finished they group themselves at head of the bunk — back center stage. Saint Valentine walks nearer to Mike and Slivers.)*

SAINT VALENTINE. I'm Saint Valentine, and the  
whole world knows me,  
For Valentines fly over land and the sea.  
I carry a gift that is caught from above,  
A dear little message, that's just Love! Love! Love!  
For Love has a magic that works many ways  
To gladden sad hearts and to brighten dull days.  
When I kindle a love-flame in somebody's heart  
There's nobody dreams what great miracles start.  
You give Love away and you still have it too —

It goes, and then comes, flying straight back to  
you.

And now *you* are under my spell from above,  
And your hearts sing my message of Love! Love!  
Love!

*(Saint Valentine bows low with his hand over his heart,  
then joins his Cupids.)*

*(Enter with stately step George and Martha Washington.  
Strains of the minuet float through the room, piano and  
violin if possible. George makes a courtly bow to Martha  
and they dance a minuet. As they finish they take their  
places at back center stage.)*

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

*(Looking toward Mike and Slivers.)*

My boys, it is years since I lived in your land  
Where loyalty, justice, and liberty stand.  
My hands took the wheel at this great nation's  
birth —

The finest and freest and strongest on earth!  
I am gone from my country, but not from her  
heart,

In the soul of her children I count it my part,  
On broad sure foundations to build straight and  
true.

Be honest, and serve well the red, white, and blue.  
And plant seeds of truth that shall root deep and  
bear

Bright records of deeds that make history fair.

This was my gift to America's youth —

Every small lad knows my love for the truth.

*(As Washington finishes his speech, he motions to Slivers  
to come to him, paying no attention whatever to Mike.)*

*The boy steps timidly forward. Washington places his hand on the boy's head, then pats him gently as though praising his honesty. Washington then steps back by the side of Martha, leaving Slivers occupying center of the stage alone. Enter Flag Fairies, each carrying flag, marching to patriotic music. They do either a dance or fancy drill at its conclusion as the music changes to "Stars and Stripes Forever." The Flag Fairies circle round Slivers, who is still in the center of the stage. The Leader of the Fairies breaks from the circle, runs forward and wraps him round with a large flag as the curtain falls.)*





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